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FROM

THE GIFT OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Adam Craik
Painter
Manchester
Feby 12th 1844

WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER.

BY JOHN RAMSAY,

KILMARNOCK, AYRSHIRE.

"Like yon neglected shrub, at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast."

GOLDSMITH.

LONDON:

DAVID BOGUE, FLEET-STREET.

THOMAS BOOTH, KING-STREET, MANCHESTER.

1844.

2.2472.41

1904

Gift of Emotion Dept.

TO

ROBERT ROSE, ESQ.,

"THE BARD OF COLOUR,"

This Volume is Inscribed,

AS

A TOKEN OF ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

JOHN RAMSAY was born in Kilmarnock in the year 1802. His education, like that of most individuals in his sphere of life, was limited. After leaving the jurisdiction of the "dominie," he resided several years with an uncle, near the village of Dundonald. The ancient castle, and the romantic scenery in the neighbourhood, linked as they are with the stirring events of Scottish history, had no doubt an inspiring effect on the ardent mind of Ramsay. Hence it is that we often find him reverting, in his poems, to the enchanting spot, with all the buoyancy of youthful enthusiasm.

He was afterwards apprenticed, in his native place, as a carpet weaver; and, amidst the din and dissonance of the loom-shop, he occasionally essayed, in fancy's dream, to visit the poet's bower. A subscription paper for a ball was at one time handed through the carpet-work, bearing these lines—

"Every good fellow who wishes to prance,
Come pray take the pencil and sign for a dance,"—

and which, as a matter of course, was submitted to Ramsay, who wrote the following *impromptu* on the back of it:—

"Old Plato once met Father Jove,
And asked the Self-Existent,
'What was in earth or heaven above
'Of all most inconsistent?'

Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
To Heaven's high towers advancing,
Unveiled this world,—'Now' says the god,
'D'ye see yon weavers dancing?'"

The satire, though it galled the more earnest promoters of the ball, was much appreciated; and Ramsay was induced to send the lines for insertion to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal,* a clever periodical, edited by Henry Glassford Bell, Esq. The lines, trifling as

they may appear, were inserted in an early number. Emboldened by encouragement, Mr. Ramsay contributed another poem to the *Journal*, entitled, "Lines to Eliza," which was also received, and highly recommended by the indulgent editor.

When the late Marquis of Hastings visited Loudon Castle in 1823, after his return from India, the Kilmarnock Volunteers and the Ayrshire Yeomanry repaired thither to congratulate him on his arrival. The excitement created in Kilmarnock by the turn-out of the volunteers was considerable, and formed the engrossing subject of conversation for several weeks. Ramsay, whose *forte* certainly lies more in the satirical than the pathetic, selected "the march" of the volunteers as a legitimate subject for his pen, and wrote an amusing poem, in which he did ample justice to some of the more eccentric characters in the "dandy corps." The poem, though only in manuscript, was widely known throughout "auld Killie," at that time ringing with

> "The great campaign,
> Which the brave Dandies did sustain."

Mr. Ramsay continued to work at the car-

pets for a number of years; but he is now, and has been for a length of time, in business as a grocer in Kilmarnock.* He is married, and has a rising family.

In 1836, after a sufficient number of subscribers had been obtained, he published the first edition of his poems, of which a thousand copies were printed. In 1839, he was induced to publish a second edition, with emendations and improvements; and now, we understand, a third edition of a thousand copies is in the press. The volume was favourably noticed in *Chambers's Journal,* and several local and other provincial newspapers.

"The Eglinton Park Meeting," the leading poem in the second edition, is among the latest of his writings; and, if we may judge from the strong poetical vein pervading it, his genius appears only to require cultivation to undertake a more daring flight. Written in the strain of Tenant's "Anster Fair," "The Eglinton Park Meeting" is a running commentary on every thing that came within the author's observation, and is a poem of undoubted merit.

* Since this sketch was written the author has sustained a severe reverse of fortune.

In the "Address to Dundonald Castle," he is no less felicitous in the selection of material than judicious in its arrangement. The ancient ruin, once the seat of Scottish royalty, is reverenced by the poet with an ardour, and described with a vigour, that touches and awakens the tender susceptibilities of the heart. We do not envy the man, who, after visiting the sylvan shades and shaggy hills of Dundonald, does not recognise, in the glowing imagery of the poet, the reality and boldness of its representation.—*From "The Contemporaries of Burns, and the more recent Poets of Ayrshire." Published by Hugh Paton, Carver and Gilder to the Queen, and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. Edinburgh.* 1840.

POEMS.

Eglinton Park Meeting.

If Pindar sung horse races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

BYRON.

I.

DAWN slowly vanished, and the source of light
  Appeared in all his summer glory drest,
And bade the seas and rivers sparkle bright,
  And cheered afar the lonely mountain's breast,
Whose shaggy top was veiled in vapours white,
  Where soared, sublime, the eagle o'er her nest,
By haunted cairn the simple lamb and ewe
Grazed 'mong red heath, wild-thyme, and harebell blue.

II.

And on a rock that aged seemed as earth,
  Where time had toiled till with his toil turned grey,
The shepherd sat, and eyed, in all her mirth,
  Nature rejoice along life's flowery way;
From blossomed thorn the mavis warbled forth,
  The linnet from the broom and birchen spray,
The cushat mourned, and, as the bass to all,
Loud thundered o'er the steep the mighty waterfall.

III.

Descending thence, along the misty plain,
  On wings of thought the 'raptured eye surveyed
Rich lawns, extending even to the main,
  And groves and vales in verdure's pomp arrayed;
And waving woods, now lost, and now again
  The broad bright river, in his strength displayed,
Proud aristocracy's bedazzling bower,
The lone sad remnants of the feudal tower.

IV.

Far other features showed the city's face,
  Buildings on buildings piled unto the sky,
The vagrant curs about the market-place,
  The high slow-moving wain, the driver's cry,
The bawling sweep, the tippler on the chase,
  Of stunted form, pale cheek, and heavy eye;
Toil's various tribes unto their tasks repair,
The drunkard to his den of frenzy and despair.

V.

O Heaven! what means this vortex we behold
  Of human passions, human joys and woes,
Of vast extremes, and much that is untold
  In life's retreats?—For ever onward flows
Time's tide, on which we rise but to be rolled
  As wrecks, with all our transports and our throes,
Down to that deep impenetrable gloom
Which hangs o'er all that lies beyond the tomb.

VI.

But with that god we have begun our song,
  Who swept of old the lyre, and strung the bow,
And dealt in pills (if Ovid be not wrong),*
  And played the devil 'mong the dames below;
When he had farther sped the heavens along,
  Our streets, lanes, highways made a glorious show,
With wains, carts, gigs, cars, studded with blythe faces,
Still answering to the query—"Are ye for the races?"

VII.

Behold how little lifts the sons of verse!
  I fast got breakfast, faster was arrayed—
For Poets' garments, like their pounds, are scarce,
  And seldom are on that account mislaid;
I cannot say that mine are the reverse,
  And, worse than that, not altogether paid;
But soon I mounted by the turnpike post,
Watching, but not like Hamlet—for a ghost.

VIII.

A car instanter trundled into sight,
  Drawn by a donkey-looking creature vile,

* Mine is the invention of the charming lyre;
Sweet notes and heavenly numbers I inspire.
Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart,
But, ah! more deadly his who pierced my heart.
Med'cine is mine, what herbs and simples grow
In fields and forests, all their powers I know;
And am the great physician called below.
DRYDEN'S OVID.

Which in its youth had galloped with delight
  On the high hills of some bleak misty isle.
A seat I found, and having sung—"All's right,"
  Sober began to measure the first mile—
Seat did I say!—a hanging on the door,
For in the vehicle were already four.

IX.

One was a dominie, a wag most queer,
  As full of mirth as is of meat the egg;
Another was his daughter, and his dear
  Partner in care a third, whom he called Meg,
Most unpolitely, odd it may appear;
  The fourth imagination out would drag,
As that kind, good, disinterested man,
Old Ireland's god and devil—honest Dan!

X.

Little occurred worth noting on the way,
  Thronged with all kinds of creatures were the high-
    ways,
Of every colour in the light of day,
  Crowds still came forth to join them from the byeways.
In Dreghorn village took we a short stay,—
  For having got, as some say, "kin' o' dry-ways;"
Dreghorn that line of houses, huts, or steadings;
Geese, ducks, pigs, pigeons, dubs, and monstrous mid-
    dens!

XI.

But into Irvine by-and-bye we got,
  Where swarms were casting fast, and others hiving,
And others sweeping past as hard and hot
  As Monsieur Jehu had resumed the driving:
Waiters and ostlers drawing in the groat,
  Like bladders blowing were their purses thriving,
Old Lethe's stream had swallowed up the ills
Of life, crossed loves, wives, and dishonoured bills.

XII.

By Jupiter, it is a glorious thing
  That there are times when we forget our cares,
Else to the grave they would our craniums bring,
  Long, long ere garnished by the hoary hairs
The patriarch spake of;* but come, trim your wing,
  My Muse, and mind more intimate affairs,
For now the scene of action we are near,
And best of company in front and rear.

XIII.

Through the deep ruts and fast fatiguing sand
  Strained little Charlie, though it was but slow,
And sunk his hoof where Neptune did command
  The bounding waves a thousand years ago,
When unexpectedly he made a stand—
  "Broke down," was chanted round, "broke down, hallo."

* Genesis xlii. 38.

Our precious dominie at once alighting,
Leaped up into the air like cock afighting!

XIV.

And stamped and swore with terrifying mien,
  And cursed each thing that ever went on wheel,
Since the first day that chariot was seen
  Which had the prophet footman to Jezreel;*
All horses, mules, and asses, that have been
  Since Balaam's donkey made her grand appeal;
Each soul that ever drove a car a mile,
Since chariots started in the land of Nile.

XV.

To every heathen deity for aid
  He cried aloud; but suddenly detecting
His error, next to all the saints he prayed—
  (When wroth we're nowise given to reflecting,)
All fiends of whom e'er Milton mention made
  He next invoked, and, foresaid things collecting,
With oaths which never shall escape my tongue,
To them with reckless dash the whole concern he flung.

XVI.

But oft when rudest storms have ceased to blow,
  Dame Nature will assume her sweetest face,
And after heights are hollows still, we know—
  This with our dominie was just the case.

* 1 Kings xviii. 46.

Perhaps such impious lengths he did not go,
  For rhymers ever are a lying race;
But on *shanks-naigie*, or the "Independent,"
We gained the racing-ground—a scene resplendent!

XVII.

Yet ere I dare it in descriptive flight,
  My song, dear Nature! shall arise to thee;
What transports fond, what dreams, what visions bright,
  Thy charms have given me even in infancy;
Thy dewy wild flowers—dawn—and dying light
  Of day, far o'er the wide illumined sea,
Thy mossy rocks, grey hills, and woodlands green,
Where my young soul first talked with things unseen.

XVIII.

Behold the sandy plain here tells a tale
  Of earth's mutations, to the thinking mind,
In words of thunder; westward the wide vale
  Of mighty waters, rising to the wind,
And glittering in the sun, where the full sail
  Of Industry or Pleasure still we find,
August Ben-Ghoil,* where evening billows meet,
And wash with songs the giant monarch's feet.

* Ben-Ghoil, the mountain of the winds, is generally known by its English and less poetical name of Goatfield.—*Scott's Lord of the Isles.* It is the highest mountain in the romantic Island of Arran.

XIX.

O, ho! my little sentimental blue,
  You're at your woods, your hills, and streams again;
I'd thank you more to turn and take a view
  Of titled Beauty, through the chariot pane.
The world's wide continents their tributes due
  Have given to her shrine, and all in vain
We seek for similes to describe the fair,
For Nature's highest, brightest work is there.

XX.

And many a youth of fair and manly die,
  On charger of our isle's unrivalled breed,
Swift as the whirlwinds of the desert fly,
  Pricks o'er the plain the snorting fiery steed.
What splendid equipages glitter by,
  With sober, stately pace, or graceful speed:
Homer! all chariots in thy Trojan scenes,
Were mere wheelbarrows unto our machines.

XXI.

Now get your spectacles my wayward dame,
  Some self-styled critics say you're short of sight—
Nay, altogether stupid, blind, and lame;
  (It may be)—but we'll canter o'er a height,
Whose very base would paralyze the same;
  And from one page of Nature's book of light
Draw sweets their souls are strangers to:—let's hence,
What mastiff minds the messin's impudence?

XXII.

Next see our buirdly farmers join the throng,
  Upon their blacks, and browns, and lumbering greys;
Blithe as the larks the morning clouds among,
  Hale as the breeze that fans their native braes;
And clergy, aye, their gowns and faces long,
  And other furniture of Sabbath days
Are off; and lawyers, beagles too—that's odd:—
No! Satan once came 'mong the sons of God.

XXIII.

Jack squeezes here his quid as in a vice,
  And sea-born phrases deals, and oaths wholesale;
And there are men of garters, thimbles, dice,
  While others nuts and gingerbread retail;
And some with organs, monkeys, and white mice,
  While the *light fingers* follow mammon's trail,
And prove by practice what the scriptures say,
  "That riches oft make wings and flee away."

XXIV.

Well, I do think, and almost too could swear,
  They're here from every land beneath the sun,
And moon, and stars, and clouds—from each nook where
  The wind has blown, grass sprung, or water run,
Where'er mankind have felt the thorns of care,
  Or loved, or hated, or seen that old one,
Called Death, although I miss the Ashantees,
And Cook's old cronies of the southern seas.

XXV.

And fore and aft, and right and left, they drive,
  And ride, and walk, and run, condense, and scatter,
Numerous as tenants of the busy hive,
  Or the small gentlemen in drops of water
Seen by the microscope, a mass alive:
  And joined with this, say, what a fund of matter
For sad reflection, may we glean from you
Neglected churchyard, all so sad and lone.

XXVI.

But to the tents away now we must hie—
  The sun's far up, and soon the race will start—
And all things look more brilliant to the eye,
  When folks have something got to keep the heart.
To paint this panorama grand when I
  Attempt, as vain, as futile is my art,
As 'twould be catching Garnock* in a riddle,
Or playing on the tongs 'gainst Paganini's fiddle.

XXVII.

With jostling, squeezing, driving, and what not,
  We reached at length the vortex of commotion,

* Garnock, a small river in the district of Cunningham, Ayrshire, which rises from the foot of a very high hill in the moor called the Mistylaw, on the northern boundary of the county, parish of Largs, and runs shallow, clear, and beautiful, down the hill towards the south; it holds on its course through the parishes of Dalry and Kilwinning, enlarged as it flows by the addition of the Caaf and the Rye, till it falls into the sea at the harbour of Irvine.—*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

And took our seats among a merry lot,
  Deeply engaged in Bacchanal devotion;
Pestiferous power! for all that has been wrote,
  And said, and seen, we drain thy deadly potion;
And oft yield part by part, till sinks the whole—
Unnerved the system, and unmanned the soul.

XXVIII.

And, shade of Hogarth, what a scene was here,
  Such eating, drinking, jesting, laughing, courting;
And, by the aid of Fancy's fairy gear,
  It seemed that meat and drink had ta'en to sporting,
Their riders thirst and hunger, their career
  The gullet, and the goal that all supporting
Organ ycleped the stomach,—ill supplied
In Ireland, and in England deified.

XXIX.

But my poor Pegasus is off the course:
  No wonder, for he has a sorry rider;
Indeed, 'tis just such horseman and such horse,—
  The muse should run into a hole and hide her:
To every one we pass we are a source
  Of shaking laughter—none e'er wandered wider
From Phœbus' paths, o'er ditch and quagmire skelpin',
The tailor unto Brentford, or John Gilpin.

XXX.

Come, truce:—here, as Silenus drunk of old,
  Sits Kate M'Killop, erst of Sannox Glen,*
Which modern avarice has turned a fold—
  Once the dear homes of happy Highlandmen;
Moulder the rent green walls—the hearths are cold;
  Where stood the cradle is the fox's den;
And many of her sons have found a grave
In that far world beyond the Atlantic wave.

XXXI.

But when the midnight moon has climbed the heaven,
  And pale, cold, pure, shines each attendant star,
To deep, deep vales a deeper tint is given,
  And meeting tides their murmurs send afar,—
The spirits of the forms of days, long driven
  Away upon the wheels of Time's swift car,
Return, and o'er their joys and sorrows gone,
Moan on the wind around the grey grave-stone.

XXXII.

However, let's go back and see our Kate,
  Who, as the glass and hiccup will allow,

*A beautiful glen in the north of the island of Arran, in the bosom of which a number of happy families had for centuries resided, till the year 1830, when they were expelled by the agent of the lord of the soil, and the grounds converted into sheep-walks—the greater part of the ancient tenants emigrated to North America. The name of M'Killop may still be traced on some of the rude stones that there mark the dust of men of other days.

Holding, with both hands, firmly by the seat,
To neighbour spins this yarn, with beck and bow:—
"Our ane an' me was here last year, and great
"Was the galravagin and fun—hech-ho!—
"Here's luck!—but there was ae race, sic ne'er seen
"Was in Guid's yirth by ony body's een.*

XXXIII.

"I think there either was some aucht or nine
"O ladies, wi' their ponies, this race rade,
"In tap-boots, breeks, sleeved waistcoats, bonnets fine
"Buskit wi' ribbons, feathers lang and braid.
"Here's luck, man, Donald, baith to thee and thine!
"I ne'er leugh mair sin' ever I was made,
"Nor I did at an eldren dame that wan it,
"She leukt sae awfu' queer frae 'neath her bonnet.

XXXIV.

"Whether it was the ridin' brought the bluid
"Into her face, or no, I canna say;
"But every smitch o't was a kin' o' red,
"Or rather somethin' comin' near a blae;
"And lang white whiskers on her face, some said—
"My een's no what they ance were in a day—
"Eigh, but here's tae her! be her what she will,
"Of horsemanship she showed no trifling skill."

* A race was run, in 1836, with ladies' ponies, the gentlemen riders being dressed in ladies Leghorn bonnets. It was won for Miss Boswell, of Auchinleck, by Mr. Campbell, Sornbeg.

XXXV.

With glass in hand, now o'er the form went Kate,
  Right in a box of pies and gingerbread—
O'erturned a vintner, near about the weight
  Of a prize ox;—like drowning people, glad
To seize on any thing, he fastened straight
  Upon a gauntree's end, completely clad
With casks, and down it came—the host grew pale,
For 'neath it stood a gross of bottled ale!

XXXVI.

The souls and bodies of the bottles were
  Sent to destruction, save a precious few—
As Calvin tells us human beings are;
  Or like the "Highland Watch" at Waterloo:
Ten women fainted—fifteen some aver;
  Perished of corset laces twenty-two:
Who doubts the truth of what is written here,
May find it all in the *Dumfries Courier.*

XXXVII.

And is it thus?—O when will ye be wise!
  My muse, whene'er ye find your favourite regions,
Ye fly like Vulcan hurled from upper skies,
  Hume on the pensions, Boswell's* carrier pigeons;
Nay, pray don't now affect the least surprise,—
  The race starts, sure as men of all religions
Deem they are right, and 'tis a pretty omen—
You stand here trifling 'bout a drunken woman.

* Sir James Boswell, Baronet, of Auchinleck.

XXXVIII.

But through the ever-tumbling human sea,—
By Feeling's gales, by winds of Passion tossed,—
We've steered with pilot caution to the lee,
And anchor dropt near harbour winning-post.
But hark! lo, off they to the contest be,
Loud sound the hoofs upon the trembling coast,
And each as anxious is to be the winner,
As Satan watching o'er a dying sinner.

XXXIX.

And watch he does, they say, most warily;—
Who say? the clergy;—and, 'tis therefore true;
Now, what a great old blackguard he must be;
But his attendance may be merely through
A touch of kindness;—o'er their daily fee,
Some farmers cart their weary reapers to
Their homes;—so, life's day ended, Nick a sail
May give his slaves—or canter on his tail.

XL.

Enough of this—behold like thought or light
They fly; but these are similes too bold;—
To have it like the wind, were something trite,
And, by-the-bye, I think a little cold;
To say they fly, or unto distant sight
Appear to fly, with critics e'en may hold;
Though I ne'er yet have heard of flying steed
Save Pegasus, who was not known to breed.

XLI.

In ladies, lords, knights, gents of every grade,
  Clergy, physicians, lawyers, and cut-purses,
Men of each business, calling, craft, and trade,
  'Tis pleasant to behold how high the force is
Of the excitement, at this point displayed;
  Hung in suspense they're—though upon the course is
None quite exact, like Absalom on the oak,
When fled his treacherous mule, which was no joke.

XLII.

And as the rivals to the goal draw nigh,
  Like dying storms in some rock-circled bay
Rises a clamour, or more like the cry
  Of crowds when in the electioneering way;
When men are valued just as they will lie,
  The greater fib the louder the huzza;
While others shout, approve, condemn, though heard
Distinct, they've not one solitary word.

XLIII.

Ho! now they come—whatever head, or heart,
  Or hand, or heel can do, is deftly done;
See, see, 'tis past,—away the people start,
  Scorning each barrier, crying, "Boswell's won."
'Twere surely now a very foolish part,
  Should one course-guard attempt to stop the run;—
Though we each day see things more foolish still—
As Owen's schemes—Sir Andrew Agnew's bill.

XLIV.

And now, most patient reader, if you please,
  We'll have a little soothing relaxation,
While things are at a kind of "stand at ease;"
  But hark ye first this scrap of conversation:—
"Well, blow my eyes, since e'er I've cruised the seas,
  "If yet I've looked on better navigation:
"And though the Pilot came too late to port,
"'Twas but by point of prow, and d—d good sport."*

XLV.

Now here, some antic specimens we'll see
  Of various animals, both wild and tame,
Fit to bring Wombwell's grand menagerie—
  Or even Captain Noah's, unto shame.
Some making loves, bets, bargains, ardently
  Playing their parts in life's vain subtle game;
Some slyly take their leave,—as of his host
Did Boney, when o'ercome by General Frost.

XLVI.

And some, again, where Justice keeps her shop,
  Contrive to hold a most confounded bustle;
Men of six feet through crevices do pop,
  That scarcely would admit my Lord John Russell.

* Wednesday, April 26, 1837. Match, one hundred sovereigns, h.ft., Sir James Boswell's ch. g., Patriot, 4 years old, 11st. 4lb. (Mr. Grant M'Dowall), beat Lord Eglinton's b. g. Pilot, aged, 12st. 7lb. One mile. (A splendid race, and won by the nose.) —*Ayr Observer*.

Halloo! what's up now, backward, forward, stop,—
  'Tis, as my grandmother would say, a tussle;
But who would not risk random treads and squeezes
To see men tested in a scale like cheeses.

XLVII.

Others, before the tabernacle, or tent,
  Or what d'ye call't, where all grandees repair,
Stand, showing each expression that e'er went
  To form ill-breeding's most accomplished stare.
Some do, as did the Whigs in Parliament,
  Which was just nothing—sure now most unfair;—
Nay, by the gods! say, what did either House?
The mountains laboured, and brought forth—a mouse!

XLVIII.

Four things I know not, Solomon hath said;
  Four things there are which I sincerely pity;
But sympathy of bards to none brings aid,
  More than the wind's sigh to a famished city:
They want the wherewithal, apt to parade
  What brings but small relief, their whole—a ditty;
And like the cuckoo sing, their own affairs
Meantime the object of another's cares.

XLIX.

First, then, a bigot, whose beloved creed
  The world unprejudiced can plainly see

A bore, a bagatelle, nonsense; indeed,
  What i' the nature of things can never be;
Life spent in doing nought; he who can plead
  The cause of doctrines, whose absurdity
He knows full well;—young Beauty, else placed snugly,
If wed to husband crabbed, old, and ugly.

L.

But what connection, you will doubtless say,
  Have all the figures you've of late been tracing;
Cuckoos, and clergy, statesmen, beasts of prey—
  Unto the subject you proposed—horse-racing.
I know my muse is oft, like one next day
  After being drunk, some fancied meteor chasing;
And that her brain as pregnant is with havers
As is with scepticism a Paisley weaver's.

LI.

For most my days in Killie* have been passed,
  Where merit only dwells with monied men,
And these are scarce enough become at last,
  A child might write them e'en without a pen;
But hear, Phrenology! and stand agast;
  If there the purse is well developed, then
They're clever, intellectual, "decent" gemmen,
Though fools, or fit to jig it a-la-Haman.

* Kilmarnock.

LII.

"O! Killie, Killie," said some hapless bard,
(As most have been that ever touched the string,)
"Thou art my native spot, by fortune hard
"Compelled am I to distant wandering;
"Farewell! thy name I'll cease but to regard
"When ceases life unto my heart to bring
"Its flood; but ne'er shalt thou my ashes hide,
"Thou sink of scandal, poverty, and pride."

LIII.

But some will say it is a pretty town,
With which opinion I may yet agree;
Still one thing brings it not a little down,
It seems to have been made for two or three,
Or six or seven; or, lest dame Killie frown,
We'll say her *elect* may eleven be,
And some of these (heaven knows) make one inclined
To think that Fortune's mad as well as blind.

LIV.

Hist! what in the name of wonder 's coming here?
'Tis a dog-chariot, forsooth, and three!
And there's a maniac sweep, who seems to fear
Water nor wind, nor ought beside does he!
His head, neck, feet, all want the usual gear,
Yet wears the happiest visage I can see!
Nature such minds from care does kindly sever—
He shouts "Sir James and Eglinton for ever."

LV.

And, lo! ranged ready at the starting post,
  Eight—the crack hunters of the day—appear;
Enough to summon to this world the ghost
  Of mighty Nimrod; and he may be here
Enjoying all, on aerial billows tossed;—
  You can't say no, I'm sure, my reader dear;—
But to the race (let him who doubts disprove it),
'Twas won by Captain Houston's horse, Cognovit.*

LVI.

But scenes so similar why dallying sing?
  'Tis my opinion that the muse supposes
All men are Jobs that listen to her string,
  Or meek as Jewish legislator—Moses.
Of this, and that, and every other thing,
  She deals about such overpowering doses;
But after this, which I'll be sworn you'll tire on,
Just read for regimen a page of Byron.

* Wednesday, April 26, 1837. The Trial Stakes of 5 Sovs. each, P.P., with 20 Sovs. added by the Club, for Hunters. Half-a-mile. Five-year-olds, 11st. 11lb.; six ditto, 12st. 3lb.; aged, 12st. 3lb.

Captain Houston's Cognovit, aged.....(Owner)	1
Mr. Ramsay's b. g. Tamworth, by Canteen, 6 years.....	2
Mr. A. Campbell's Guess, by Champignon, aged.....	3
Earl of Eglinton's Pilot, aged.....	0
Sir James Boswell's Læona, by Juniper, 5 years.....	0
Mr. D. Davidson's Vint-un, aged.....	0
Sir D. Baird's ch. g. The Bird, aged.....	0
Mr. Kerr's The Kitten, aged.....	0

—*Ayr Observer.*

LVII.

For I have penned much nonsense in my time—
  Volumes in verse, and waggon loads in prose,
The first the antipodes of all sublime,
  Beneath where even your proper critic throws
His dart; and now about wrought out in rhyme,
  As miners say, a halt I should propose;
For trash more trashy grows by repetition;
See Lockhart's poems in the third edition.

LVIII.

And now we met a friend of early days,
  And sought the calmest corner of a tent;
Reserve was packed on her penurious ways,
  And canker care unto the misers sent;
We basked a while in friendship's cheering rays,
  And to our warmest feelings gave a vent;
At last the hound, Time, broke us from the cover,
When, lo! the races for a day were over.

LIX.

Troop after troop was disappearing fast,
  Like morning's shadows from the misty lea;
The wave rose gently to the strengthening blast,
  And the blue hills looked sullen on the sea;
The birds sang sweetly; in the glowing west
  The sun, about into eternity
To roll the day, rode glorious—his smile
Lay lovely on the cliffs of Arran's rocky isle.

LX.

Much yet remains might be detailed in song,
  Ere to the dwellings got the honest folk;
For steeds stood at the doors of taverns long,
  And gigs and cars were, and commandments, broke;
And some discussed a beverage so strong,
  Surprised next morn they in the ditch awoke,
And found their stomachs have unusual twitches,
Which sometimes happens when we sleep in breeches!

LXI.

We cannot sing, forsooth, we have not seen
  How merrily within the lofty hall
The feast was held, and youths of noble mien
  And fairy figures mingled in the ball:
My muse is in the dumps and jaded clean,
  Moreover, won't of dancing sing at all—
And for this piece of indolence does plead
She's steadfast Antiburgher in her creed.

LXII.

But all must have an end—this day has had,
  The races, we must, and so must this rhyme;
The world, sin too—of that I'm very glad,
  And think it is a doctrine most sublime,
And wish it soon (of late I'm grown so bad),
  Betwixt sin and repentance all my time
Is spent. But, reader, I must close this strain,
Some other day perhaps we'll meet again.

Address to Dundonald Castle.*

O, ANCIENT pile! fast hastening to decay,
Around thy ruins, musing as I stray,
How many mingling feelings do I find,
With pleasing sadness burst upon my mind.
Long hast thou stood beneath the stroke of time,
And all the rigours of a northern clime;
And changes witnessed, generations seen
Swept from the earth, as if they ne'er had been;
To the lone land of dim oblivion hurled,
Where clouds of ages veil the midnight world.

Oft thou hast seen the morning sun arise,
And spread his glories o'er the eastern skies—

* Dundonald Castle is a ruin of great celebrity, and occupies a commanding situation in the district of Kyle in Ayrshire. It was originally the property of Robert Steuart, who, in right of his mother, Marjory Bruce, succeeded to the Scottish throne, under the title of Robert II.; and who here wooed and married his first wife, the beauteous Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan. Dr. Johnson, on being conducted to the place by Boswell, is said to have made the ruin ring with laughter at the idea of a Scottish monarch being contented with the narrow accommodations of a slender tower of three stories, each story containing only one apartment. —*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

Shine round the world, rejoicing as he drave,
Then sink sublime beyond the western wave;
And oft his fading beams have cheered thy halls,
And lingered sweetly on thy dark grey walls.

Spring thou hast often seen, with gaudy train
Of opening buds and blossoms, glad the plain:
Along these hills the robes of summer shine,
As oft, like all beneath the sun, decline;
Their toils, their pleasures witnessed, numbers know,
That now, with all that moved the world, lie low.

Autumn—rich autumn—thou hast seen unfold
Her treasures vast of fading green and gold—
Her bended branches, fields of waving corn—
Her sultry noon, chill eve, and dewy morn—
Her wains returning with their precious boon,
Beneath the glories of her ripening moon;
How oft, perchance, some lovelorn swain has heard,
Or wandering song-wrapt melancholy bard,
With harp unseen, as spirit sung his tale
At midnight still, by woodland in the vale.

Fast by the verge of yon sequestered wood,
Where mourns the cushat for her captured brood,
Methinks an ancient reaper-band appears,
Their graves now furrowed with a hundred years;
Back to the world I see their forms return,
Souls that now perfect in the empyrean burn;

They stoop, they strain, with careful hands they raise
The scanty crop of long-forgotten days.
Behind them stalks the venerable sire,
Controls or counsels as their needs require;
And, as the labour burns, his heart beats high,
Joy beams triumphant in his aged eye;
A well-worn bonnet on his hoary head,
Long silver locks upon his shoulders spread;
Bent with the blast of days, yet firm withal,
Like yon grey oak that scorns the tempest's call;
Health, innocence, and peace around him play,
And gild the hours of life's declining day.

Now on the hills descend the shades of night,
The twinkling stars shed down a feeble light;
Homeward they go, and mark the inviting flame
Dance on the window's solitary frame;
As perched the redbreast 'mong the yellow leaves,
Sings to the wind, slow whispering through the sheaves;
Where are they now? some spirit seems to say;
Lost to the world, and mouldering in the clay.
In yonder spot, alike unknown they lie,
Till the last morn shall dawn along the sky.

Oft hast thou stood in night of awful storm,
Seen whirlwinds wild sweet nature's face deform;
The red swollen rivers with the ocean rage,
And deep with deep tremendous warfare wage;

And like to Faith, from sad Affliction born,
Forth from the darkness come the smiling morn.

While from thy ruined heights my eyes survey
Heaven's mighty arch and ocean's boundless way,
By Fancy's aid I see the lightning fly,
And hear the thunder roll along the sky;
O'er the blue void behold impetuous sweep,
On whirlwinds throned, the spirits of the deep;
Wild, foaming, fierce, the crested billows rise,
Like snow-capt mountains mingling with the skies;
Now roll afar with long tempestuous roar,
Now awful burst upon the trembling shore,
Pour gloomy clouds along the affrighted plains
From their wide wombs the desolating rains.
Hark! o'er the dread abyss the sea-bird screams,
The rocks resound, again the lightning gleams!
Again, harsh thunder rends its swaddling cloud,
The forests crash, the rivers shriek aloud;
Down the black hills, before the torrent's force,
Roll shattered rocks, still gathering in their course;
Groan, as beneath this whelming host is hurled,
The adamantine pillars of the world.

Lo! far along the deep, the sport of tides
And warring winds, a lonely vessel rides;
Now on the billow's mighty convex tossed,
Now in the whelming surge completely lost;

The crew's frail remnant on the rigging spread,
Long for a shore their feet shall never tread.
Weak grows the bark, and shattered with her toil,
As on she labours through the vast turmoil;
Hope sighs farewell! they shriek—down, down she goes,
The clasping billows o'er their victim close.

Turn, my wild thoughts, nor dwell upon the scene,
Too far in fancy's fairy land we've been;
See! calm the ocean spreads itself along,
With mellowing murmur to the zephyr's song;
Night's purple sky o'erhangs the mighty flood,
Far weltering wide, in trembling waves of blood.

How drear the prospect; yea, how wild the view,
When from thy heights his glance the warder threw,
Ere Science bade her sun, with radiance free,
Dawn on our distant island of the sea;
Tall, towering forests sullen gloomed around;
And flung their shadows o'er the vast profound;
A semblance keen the sylvan country bore
To the dark wilds that skirt Columbia's shore.*

But cultivated now—till fades the eye,
Unnumbered beauties ranged in order lie;
The town that shades in smoke its giant form,
The stately spire that wrestles with the storm;

* The ancient Caledonian forest is supposed to have covered a part of Ayrshire.

The splendid villa, and the lofty dome—
Wealth's safe retreat, and pleasure's softest home;
The verdant lawns, where greenwoods intervene;
The twinkling rill, the lonely cot serene;
All—all combined, beam full upon the sight,
One heavenly picture of refulgent light.

The cloistered monk, the shrewd designing priest,
With all the trumpery of the Popish beast;
Thou hast beheld, when Superstition hoar
Triumphant spread her wings from shore to shore;
When banished Truth at times an effort made,
To peep affrighted through the dismal shade.
But like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Dawned Reformation on the darkling crowd,
Bade Learning rise, and Liberty expand
Her cheering rays, and glad the weary land.
Now Art, now Science on Britannia smile,
And hand in hand dance round the stormy isle;
No more to monkish mummery is given
The adoration due alone—to heaven;
No more the host, to tyrants ever dear,
Shall curb bright genius in her fierce career.
Away! away, blind leaders of the blind!
Curse to the earth, and ruin of mankind!

Stern Persecution with his naked brand,
Hast also witnessed traversing the land;
His blood-red standard streaming in the van,
With bearings hostile to the rights of man;

And all the woes a bleeding nation feels,
In ghastly order rampant at his heels.

Methinks thou answerest with an hollow groan,
Yea, and would wept, could tears have come from stone,
To see old Scotia's sons for conscience sake,
Doomed to the rack, the gibbet, and the stake;
Or plunged in noisome cells, or sold to die
In servile bonds beneath a burning sky.
The peaceful cottage in the moorland vale,
The scene of deeds that modesty must veil;
Then to the flames its humble rafters given,—
The tender wife and helpless offspring driven
On the wide world, the father forced to hide
In some lone cavern on the mountain's side;
Or in the labyrinths of some gloomy dell,
There with his God and Solitude to dwell;
Where the dark stream that slid the vale along,
Murmured responsive to the martyr's song,
That rose at midnight oft, when all was still,
And swept in heavenly strains the lonely hill;
Looked down the wondering moon—the stars on high,
In conscious silence, wheeled along the sky;
The spirits gliding through the midnight air,
Heard for his foes the wanderer's fervent prayer.

O! may the monster ne'er again invade
Our isle, nor here his triumphs be displayed,

But sleep secure as ages roll away,
With things long buried from the glance of day.
And, O! my soul, for present peace, adore
The Power Supreme; and that great Power implore,
That all oppressed and wronged of humankind
May soon their rights and privileges find,
From where the line's deep burning billows roll,
E'en to the dark dominions of the pole.

When feudal bands engaged, and fields were lost,
Thou prov'dst a shelter to the vanquished host;
Oft have thy walls the fierce assault withstood,
And thy green hill been dyed with hostile blood.
But bending now beneath a load of years,
Frail and departing all thy strength appears;
Loud through thy riven walls the tempests howl;
The dark recesses of the lonely owl
And sable rook, which tenant the abode
That courtiers, knights, and warriors have trode.

Strange it may seem, yet Scottish records tell
Even regal splendour deigned in thee to dwell;
How sadly changed—in thy deserted halls
Rank grow the weeds; and round thy ruined walls
The ivy creeps; thine ancient glory's fled;
Thine ancient tenants numbered with the dead.
Yea, with the stream of time a wave rolls on,
Whose surge shall leave thee not a standing stone;

The sun shall rise, the waning moon decline,
The night look down, the star of morning shine,
And mark thy towers, that long have braved the rust
Of time departed, level with the dust.

Long ere that day shall this frail form be prest
In the dread arms of everlasting rest,
A nameless thing, beneath the footstep's tread,
Long, long forgotten 'mong the silent dead.
These eyes, that gaze on ocean, sun, and shore,
Shall burn with rapture at the sight no more;
And this sad heart, so oft the seat of wo,
Shall feel no more the agonizing throe.

Thus things terrestrial wing their rapid flight,
Clouds of the morn, or vapours of the night;
The sons of men like shadows flee away;
The everlasting hills themselves decay;
Yon towering cliff—lone pillar of the sky,
Shall o'er the plain in mouldering ruins lie;
Proud cities perish and their sites be lost,
And e'en old Ocean seek another coast;
Britannia's isle shall sleep beneath the wave,
And o'er her pride the fierce Atlantic rave;
The moon herself forget through heaven to ride,
And draw from shore to shore the heaving tide;
Yea, vanish shall earth's great revolving ball,
For change and vanity is stamped on all!

Lament of Robert Tannahill.

INSCRIBED TO MR. J. KING, PAISLEY, THE FRIEND OF THE POET.*

My muse, in showers let sorrow's rain
Descend, awake thy saddest strain,
And call on Nature to sustain
Thy simple skill;
Her warmest worshipper is gane—
Meek Tannahill.

Lives there a man that half but knows
A Poet's feelings, frailties, woes;
His heart's sad ebbs and overflows;
How melted will
His soul be o'er the life's sad close
Of Tannahill!

* See Tannahill's Poems.

His meed of fame he asked—nor high
His claims were stretched,* yet could deny
The cold harsh world, with jaundiced eye,
Adjudging ill;
But "wounded worth forbade reply"
From Tannahill.

The rustic heel can tread the rose,
The stream soil that in silver flows,
Seduction with a thousand throes,
Sweet Beauty kill;
Neglect and Envy crush with woes
A Tannahill.

O, world invidious! loth art thou
The laurels to the living brow
Of lowly minstrel to allow;
What serves thy skill,
Displayed in lengthened wailings now
For Tannahill.

Go, in thy selfish thoughtless pride,
But placed in hall by Beauty's side,
While woke by Music's vocal tide
Is Rapture's thrill;
How wronged, thou then may'st there decide,
Was Tannahill.

* When the man of taste and discrimination reads these pieces, he will no doubt find passages that might have been better; but his censures may be qualified with the remembrance that they are the effusions of an unlettered mechanic, whose hopes as a poet extend no farther than to be reckoned respectable among the minor bards of his country.—*Preface to Tannahill's Poems.*

His strains are sung, his numbers read
From palace to the lowliest shed,
'Mong burning deserts, mountains clad
With glaciers chill;
While, without stone to mark his bed,
Sleeps Tannahill.

But, as bemoaning Minstrels tell,
When visits spring "Gleniffer's dell,"
Rich on the "crawflower's early bell"
The dews distill,
The tears of Nature's "bonny sel'," For Tannahill.

When the last sun of summer's shed
On huge Benlomond's lofty head,
And far is sunk in ocean's bed,
Clouds linger still,
Streaks of deep mourning purple red,
For Tannahill.

When yields the aged year her pride,
Is heard by plantain's sunny side,
Where sweet the "woodland burn" does glide,
The redbreast shrill,
The voice of Nature's empire wide,
For Tannahill.

When winter, with resistless power,
Sweeps through the halls of Stanley Tower,

'Tis said, at midnight's awful hour,
His tempests will
Mourn with the spirit of the bower
For Tannahill.

And long shall kindred genius come,
And linger pensive by his tomb;
When earth's proud potentates the womb
Of darkness fill,
Verdant the memory shall bloom
Of Tannahill.

Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem.

LUKE xix. 41.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it."

JERUSALEM's temple, towers, and bulwarks lay
In all the splendours of the eastern day,
And in the blaze of palaces, embossed
With gems and gold, the astonished eye was lost;
While the bright tombs of men of ancient days
Shed their far lights and shadows on the gaze;
And the sad sites of thousand glories gone,
Diffused what sensibility alone
Can gather from the hoary wrecks of time,
And o'er them weep with sympathy sublime.

And there the High Priest to the temple trode,
While far behind his shining garments flowed;
But, O! how lacking in the important part,
The inward man—the adorning of the heart;
Proud, grasping ever both at power and gold,
To all improvement still a barrier bold;

For the same spirit through the race has run,
Of every creed and clime beneath the sun.

Beauty, sweet Beauty, gorgeously arrayed,
Shone in each path—the matron and the maid;
The tender infant, grasping in its fears
The wall; the patriot of an hundred years,
Whose furrowed cheek and faded eye were wet
For the far sun of Israel's glory set:
As sits the watchful spider in her snare,
Sat the shrewd lawyer—and all pompous there
The self-adoring Pharisee—while fleet
The man of business hurried through the street.

And there the war-horse pranced, and rushed amain
To phantom battle o'er the dusty plain,
And formed the hostile squadrons that had known
The stern extremities of every zone;
Yet the same dauntless and unconquered host,
In Lybia's glow, and Caledonia's frost,
And here to wondering multitudes unfurled
Their arts of war that had subdued the world;
While, by the portal of the strong-built tower—
Shade of their crimes, and shelter of their power—
The sullen sentinel, with tread profound,
Flung the defiance of his looks around.
The city smiled, the melancholy smile
That wretched beauty sheds, yet weeps the while;
The trace of dignity the prince retains,
Dragged at the conqueror's chariot wheel in chains.

Messiah came!—benignant was his mien,
His followers few—as Truth's have ever been;
Unknown to pomp and pageantry, that wait
Around the form of son of regal state;
Though it was his salvation to bestow,
Theirs, oft to plunge whole provinces in woe.

He paused! beheld the dismal scene dilate,
Of Israel's present, past, and future state;
Beheld her love in happier period shown,
When God she followed in a land unsown,
And heartfelt songs amid the desert rose,
Of trust in him, and triumph o'er their foes;
And warnings often given, but given in vain,
And mercies offered ne'er to be again;
The woes from heaven, by obstinacy wrung,
That in thick closing clouds above her hung,
While she beneath infatuated slept,
Till, lo! the Saviour she rejected—wept!
* Saying, "Hadst thou known, even thou in this thy day,
"The things belonging to thy peace, but they
"Are now for ever hidden from thine eyes;
"And soon upon thee shall the days arise,
"That cast a trench about thee shall thy foes,
"Compass thee round, on every side enclose,
"And lay thee even with the ground—thine own
"Children within thee—nor shall leave one stone
"In thee above another; for thou hast
"Not known the time when visited thou wast."

* Luke xix. 42, 43, 44.

Nature arrayed herself in deepest gloom,
And hollow thunders muttered in her womb,
Alone, with lightsome heart and laughing eye,
Man unconcerned the awful sight passed by.

The Loudon Campaign.*

O! wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us.
—BURNS.

ATTENTION! all ye martial band,
The bulwarks of our native land,
On Albion's shores, on foreign strand,
By Ganges' tide,
Or where Canadian forests grand
Stretch far and wide.

* In the summer of 1823, the Marquis of Hastings, after many years spent in the "Land of the Sun," returned to his seat of Loudon Castle; on which occasion a part of the Ayrshire Cavalry and Kilmarnock Volunteers marched thither to congratulate the worthy Nobleman.

No seas of blood, no hills of slain,
No blazing cities swell my strain;
No widow's tears, nor orphan's mane—
For what are they,
When viewed wi' Loudon's great campaign?
Mere children's play.

When Hastings back frae India came,
Our "Dandies" fixed to welcome hame
The worthy chief, and swore old Fame,
That wine and wassail
Profuse, should celebrate the same
At Loudon Castle.

The Cavalry, wi' sma' persuasion,
Agreed to serve on this occasion;
But, previous, they got intimation
That nae flesh but
Such as was void of animation,
Was to be cut.

'Twas tauld in Killie a' that week,
That five large owsen, fat and sleek,
Were kilt, that Yeomanry might streek
Their jaws wi' pleasure,
And "Dandies'" bellies get a keek
Beyond stay measure.

Besides five score o' sheep, as fat
As ever walloped in a pat,

Their painches filled; an' rowth o' that,
Grand source o' evil,
Called drink, which surely mankind gat
First frae the devil.

There was a chiel, baith lank and lean,
Wha had at mony a muster been
In bygane time; but on the green,
In war's array,
The sycophant had not been seen
For mony a day.

Whene'er he heard o' the affair,
He went directly unto prayer,
"O, Lord!" said he, "my life but spare
"Till that great day,
"And thine ain servant shall his share
"O' dainties hae."

The very thought o't made him smile;
He gathered out his kit meanwhile,
An' cleaned, wi' perseverin' toil,
His firelock rusty;
An' brushed, an' shook in proper style
His garments dusty.

While emery, blacking, and pipe-clay,
In donkey-loads around him lay,
Indeed, some confidently say
That, after that,
Sic stuffs were scarce for mony a day
In that same spat.

Even in his sleep he couldna rest;
For Fancy out the table drest,
An' then he'd roar, like ane possest,
And, starting, cry,
"Slice down the beef; well, I protest;
"Fair play, stand by!"

An' there was ane, wi' Leith-walk face,
A first performer of grimace;
A patent hand at prayer, or grace;
But ready he
Was aye (when gain was in the case),
Wi' loop, or lee.

As clergy hear o' coming cash,
As gossips seize some new-hatched clash,
As trembling drunkards face-ward dash
Their *morning* dear,
So did this curious moral mash
The tidings hear.

Yea, when the hero took the beuk,*
He waled wi' earnest, anxious leuk,
Till ance he happened on a neuk
Concerning eatin',
An' then he'd read, an' roar, an' smack
Himsel' a-sweatin'.

* Family worship.

The drummer o' this warlike corps
Had fasted for a week before
The raid took place; and aften swore
He would lay in
At least a lucky fortnight's store
In his wee skin.

That mornin', when they marched awa',
He said that, "roasted, boiled, or raw,
"He'd eat a badger, tail an' a',
"Without a scunner!"
Sae keen and craving was his maw—
Sae ripe for dinner.

The day was fair, an' aff they set,
Hope hoverin' o'er them—dear coquette;
Mars leuked ower heaven's gowden yett,
The group to scan;
But turned his godship in a pet,
And thus began:—

"O, Jupiter! was e'er a sight
"Like this beheld in heaven's light,
"Since cranes and pigmies closed in fight—
"Or mice and frogs
"Displayed their direful earthquake might
"In bluidy bogs.

"Should now some hostile crowd appear,
"Wi' brickbats, stanes, or sic like gear,

"We soon wad see them, struck wi' fear,
"Tak' down the road,
"As sheep, when hangs upon their rear
"The panting tod.

"Dear Britain, should it be thy hap
"Again to face another Nap,
"Just lea' thae chiels to tent the crap,
"And shoot the craw,
"The 'Greys' will better fill a gap—
"Or 'Forty-twa.'

"A chiel might dread as muckle scaith,
"Frae turkey-cock when in his wrath,
"Or goosie peckin' in her freath,
"On nest a-sittin',
"Or drove o' big brown rattons, faith,
"When gaun a-flittin'."

Thus having said, the God of War
Resumed in wrath his blood-stained car;
Jove sent his thunderbolts afar,
Till heaven resounded;
And every orb and distant star
Winked, quite confounded.

The affrighted coursers of the sun
Had from their wonted circuit run,
But scarcely was their flight begun,
When, lo! the god
Checked their bold speed, resolved to shun
A path untrod.

But lest his radiant beams should view
This tinsel play-the sodger crew,—
Around his head dark clouds he drew,
And onward pressed,
Impatient for the evening dew
And lowering west.

As brisk they marched along the way,
Twice was the drummer heard to say,
"I fin' the smell; my boys, huzza!
"The gravy's spillin';
"But, faith, we'll have a glorious day,
"I'll hold a shillin'."

In wavering ranks behint them flew
The carrion crows, which little knew
(Puir birds) that bluid these chaps ne'êr drew,
Nor took a life:
Their field the table—arms, cork-screw,
Spoon, fork and knife!

But when a swarm of flies they'd meet,
They laid them sprawlin' at their feet;
And mony a cleg was made retreat
Ere came they till
The "bonny woods and braes" sung sweet
By Tannahill.

As fowls rank by the barnyard door,
As ducks, in frost, a pond before,

As crows upon a hillside hoar,
Portending storm,
So by the Castle 'gan the corps
At length to form.

Out came the gentles ane an' a',
And, spite of breeding's rigid law,
Scarce was suppressed the loud gaffaw;
And heads were hung,
Lips bitten, faces turned awa',
Whence bluid maist sprung!

But first impressions being o'er,
They roosed and thanked the 'foresaid corps,—
When laigh's the lintel o' the door
We needs must stoop it,
No where of this we've samples more
Than in the poopit.

Young Hastings said, and curled his nose,
"A gang of gipsies, I suppose,
"Or people come to scare the crows;
"Look ye, my Lord,
"A drummer ape, how bluff it goes,
"Upon my word."

But 'tis beyond puir simple John
Their bill of fare to venture on;
Let their ain language speak, anon,
'Twill paint it fine—
"D—d haet, except a bawbee scone,
"An' glass o' wine."

Some fainted wi' convulsive roar,
Some uttered oaths ne'er heard before,
The service some for life forswore,
Wi' frantic air;
Some veterans out in handfuls tore
Their thin grey hair.

"Waesucks, waesucks," the drummer cried;
"Waesucks," the lengthened glades replied;
To keep his feet the bodie tried,
But, quite o'ercome,
He fell, albeit his martial pride,
And brak' the drum.

The birds, affrighted, couldna sing;
The young anes in the nests took wing;
The cattle gathered in a ring,
As't had been thunder;
The very midges ceased to fling,—
But 'twas nae wonder.

And, to their shame, in this sad plight,
Part of the heroes took to flight,
And into Galston, as in height
Of summer sun,
Maddened wi' heat and insects' bite,
Whole heards will run.

Boys and dogs heard the coming row,
And raised the shout and loud bow-wow;

Auld grannies left their rocks o' tow,
And cripple men
Hopped without stilts, that ne'er could dow
The like again!

Bald-headed men forgot their hats,
Wi' tails like boas ran the cats,
Fast to their burrows took the rats
That were a-roamin',
Sic was the stoure it seemed to bats
The hour o' gloamin'!

I have the town clockmaker's word,
Each watch in window, or on board,
Stopped that he had,—an ancient sword
Frae sheath did drop,*
A fiddle o' its ain accord
Played Johnny Cope!

Yet on the warriors strode, as bold
As hares, or Parthian troops of old,
Or fleecy tenants of the fold,
When thunder roars;
Or the dun deer, when o'er the wold
The far hunt pours;

And took, and took, and took—say what?
A whole inn prisoner (think of that),

* Ancient warriors used to draw omens from their sword blades. When Lord Lovat was born, the swords in the mansion-house hall leaped spontaneously from the scabbard.—*See Lady of the Lake.*

And drank its blood, and ate its fat,
Brave valiant men;
And this achieved, their native plat
They sought again.

But laith am I to tell the fray
That raise among them by the way;
Sic civil wars again, O pray
We ne'er may hear of,
Which ended, as historians say,
Before the Sheriff.

The greater number o' the squad
Cam' hungry hame, wi' hearts right sad;
The vera Major swore, "By Gad
"It was a shame,
"And brought a stain—an odium bad
"On Hastings' name."

The drummer raised his plaintive wail,
The rocks gave back the dolefu' tale,
Yea, and the sober evening gale
That swept alang,
Bore far away, o'er hill and dale,
The mournfu' sang.

Ye who these tragic lines peruse,
While tears (nae doubt) shall flow profuse,
Should Hope hereafter lift your views,
Watch ye the cummer,
And mind how sair she did abuse
Our frien', the drummer.

St. Andrew's Message to the Scotsmen in Liverpool.

THE star-studded pinions of night waved their last,
And the day of St. Andrew was joined to the past;
When sleep had resumed o'er my eyelids its sway,
And unconscious the soul of her burden of clay,
Methought through the far fields of light's sunny blue,
On a chariot of beams of the morning I flew;
And the sound of earth's cities and ocean had died,
Like the voice of a song on the aërial tide.

Again, I beheld, and earth's cities were gone,
Of her domes, and her temples, and towers there were
none;
Not one lofty mountain had ventured to bear
Its crest of lone pride in the empire of air;
And far, far away, like the bright star of e'en,
The sun-gilded breast of the ocean was seen.

Again, I beheld, and lo! distance had thrown
Her pall over all that on earth I had known;

And o'er sun, and o'er moon, and the bright milky way,
I passed, 'neath the beams of a ne'er-setting day;
Till that city celestial, of gems and of gold,
That St. John first beheld in a vision of old;
In splendour o'erwhelming burst full on my view,
The portals revolved, and methought I passed through,
And stood on the shore of the great crystal sea,
And heard of the ransomed the sweet melody.

There, entranced as I listened, and dazzled beheld,
A form slow approached that in beauty excelled,
All lovely as Mercy and Truth, when they bear
Their boon to the death-bed of Guilt and Despair.

And he smiled as he gently on mine laid his hand,
Saying, "Listen, young Bard, and my words understand;
" By grace, here, through great tribulation I came;
" The Patron of Scotland, St. Andrew my name;
" While on earth I through faith communed daily with God,
" And the sweet paths of virtue and wisdom I trod;
" And sowed thus the seed that a harvest has given
" Of fruit everlasting, the bounty of heaven;
" And hence, 'mong the great and the mighty, my name
" Is blazoned in light by the finger of Fame.

" Thy countrymen long have the day of my birth
" Distinguished and welcomed with gladness and mirth;

"But lately on banks of the Mersey I've seen
"What if honour designed me, no honour has been.

"When the deep bowl is drained until Reason's watch-light
"Is extinguished,—and desperate and dark to the fight,
"Unmarshalled, the armies of Passion arise,
"And love drops a tear, and sweet Harmony flies;
"And man's guardian angels recoil from the sight,
"While fiends on dark errands look on with delight:
"Such scenes may give joy to the base god of wine,
"And add to his honours, but never to mine.

"Go, Bard of the Irwine, and ere thou again
"Shalt mark that fair stream mix its waves with the main,
"To men of the north who sojourn in this land,
"Disclose thou my counsel, and this my command:—

"When Time's hoary pinions again bring the day
"That closes November's cloud-mantled array,
"And far from the face of each well-cherished scene,
"The children of dear Caledonia convene;
"Let Temperance and Wisdom preside at their boards,
"Love rule all their actions, and dictate their words;
"And thus by kind heaven shall their efforts be blest,
"And with joy shall I hear in those mansions of rest."

I awoke all bewildered,—long musing I lay,
And eyed the dawn roll its deep shadows away;
My trust is disharged to the Saint,—and to you,
Ye Scotsmen, that dwell by the Mersey,—adieu.

Liverpool, 1842.

Musings by the Clyde.

LANARK, JUNE 23, 1840.

I.

THE morn appears—the lovely morn of June—
All warmly smiling on sweet Nature's face,
Like mother o'er her child, that craves the boon,
In cradled beauty, of a warm embrace;
Each moment carries on its wings some grace
The beauteous blushing goddess to array;
And every melody resumes its place
In the grand choir, to swell the lofty lay,
And Echo waits to wing the anthem on its way.

II.

Adorned with diadem of dawning's cloud,
  Hail! stately Tinto,* monarch of the scene;
Thousands of years hast thou beheld unbowed,
  Clyde roll his waves the rugged banks between,
  Yet look'st as everlasting—as serene
As when the pillars of thy strength were laid.
  Child of the earthquake! frequent hast thou seen,
Through long dark years, the Druid rites displayed,
When Nature stood aghast, and Truth had fled dismayed.

III.

And feudal times their fantasies unfold,
  Their bands of discord hurl the car of blood,
Whose brightest deeds were ever best untold,
  Whose wisdom was but Folly's wildest mood.
  Avaunt! O, Chivalry, thy greatest good
Was but the shade of very vanity;
  And went thy evils forth long unsubdued
By lapse of ages; without shore, a sea—
A wide unfathomed vast, like an eternity.

* Tinto, a lofty mountain at the head of Clydesdale, lying on the boundaries of the parishes of Carmichael, Weston, and Symington. The word *Tinto* signifies "The Hill of Fire," and derives this appellation from its summit having, in an early age, been a place whereon the Druids lighted their fires in heathen worship. From its isolated character and great height, Tinto may be seen from almost every part of Clydesdale, and even Dumbartonshire. Its highest part rises like a great dome above the other eternal edifices of nature. In clear days, the Bass may be seen on one side of the island, and the Firth of Solway on the other. There is a cairn of stones upon the summit, the top of which is elevated 2351½ feet above the level of the sea.—*Chambers.*

IV.

To whate'er point the pensive eye is cast,
  Lo! now thy halls are Desolation's prey;
Sublime memorials of the darkening past;
  And their proud tenants, where, alas! are they?
  The wild rose, on the fresh and dewy spray,
Smiles through the path where deadly shaft has sped;
  And where the trumpet summoned war's array,
The redbreast on the stunted hazel's head,
Awakes his stealing strains, that seem to mourn the dead.

V.

Where scattered lie beneath the tangled brake,
  On brink of Cartlane's* terrible abyss,
The wrecks of Castle Qua;†—now let me take
  One lofty look of this wide wilderness—
  This amphitheatre, whose green walls kiss

* Cartlane Crags, a deep chasm, supposed to have been formed by an earthquake, through which the Mouss Water (remarkable a little farther up for Roman antiquities on its banks) seeks its way to the Clyde, instead of following a more natural channel, which every body seems to think it should have followed, a little farther to the east. A bridge of three arches was thrown, in 1825, across the narrow profound; its two piers being at least a hundred feet high, while the whole length is little more. The building has an exceedingly striking effect. At a little distance below may be seen one of those narrow old bridges, with an arch precisely semicircular, supposed to be of Roman structure. In the western face of the chasm of the Crags, a few yards above the new bridge, a small slit in the rock is pointed out by tradition as having been the hiding-place of Wallace, after he had slain Heselrig. It is still termed Wallace's Cave.—*Chambers.*

† Castle Qua lies on the east side of Cartlane Crags. It is supposed to derive its name from the Gaelic word *Cuach*, a drinking cup (the *Quech* of the Lowlands), to which shape the chasm of the Mouss, when seen from the Castle, has a striking resemblance.

The dazzling summer skies; and, O! survey
  How far beneath is stretched its loneliness,
The Mouss, though sweeping with unwonted sway,
Is heard like song of storm on hill-top far away.

VI.

And down the dizzy gulph's tremendous bay,
  The giant rocks, in majesty severe,
Frown through the waving foliage, and betray
  The hawk's high citadel; but cause of fear
  None hath he, for the steps of man have ne'er
In yonder spot left their polluted trace;
  The little warrior lists with upturned ear,
His dappled pinions trims with native grace,
Then cleaves the deep blue air, like spirit of the place.

VII.

Again descend this slippery winding path,
  But with no tame emotions mark the spot;—
Here Freedom, with her chosen Wallace, hath
  Retired, when weeping Scotia's homes had nought
But fetters for the slave; and here were brought
News of the blight of his affections' bud,*

* A female attendant is said to have conveyed the melancholy intelligence to Wallace, who had retreated to Cartlane Crags. There, in the midst of his followers, he heard the heart-rending recital of his bereavements with a behaviour worthy of himself, and becoming the occasion.—*Life of Sir William Wallace, Knight of Ellerslie, and Guardian of Scotland. Published by Richard Griffin & Co., Glasgow*, 1825.

Which in his soul a fiery tempest wrought,
That drank his tears, as does the lava's flood
The dew, and burned and blazed till quenched in Southern blood.

VIII.

O! justly-famed, transcendant, peerless chief—
Age has on age long sunk beneath the tide
Of deep oblivion, yet thy laurel's leaf
Is seen to flourish in its pristine pride;
Conquering Death's power, and Time's imperious stride;
The Genius of thy country oft her eye
Lifts, to gain strength when omens dark preside,
To where thou, with her Burns, art seated high—
Twins on the hallowed mount of immortality.

IX.

Far in yon vale, where lofty towers of Lee*
O'erlook the wide arms of the mighty oak,
Which, by the voice of sage antiquity,
A thousand years has braved the tempest's stroke;

*LEE.—The environs of Lee, an elegant modern, castellated edifice (Lockhart, Baronet), contain a remarkable natural curiosity, in the shape of a large oak tree, whose trunk is thirty feet in circumference, and which having become rotten through age, can hold in its hollow inside nine persons standing upright. It is called, reason unknown, the Pease Tree, and is supposed to be a relic of the ancient Caledonian forest. Under its venerable shade charters connected with the family are said to have been written, and it has been entailed by written deeds for fourteen generations.

There, when her beauteous neck unto the yoke
Of Superstition, Caledonia bowed,
From distant parts would weary pilgrims flock,
To bear the water hence with charm endowed,
Art, nature, fate to foil—at least so deemed the crowd.*

* THE LEE PENNY.—This curious heir-loom, of talismanic celebrity, was acquired by an ancestor of the present possessor of the estate of Lee, Sir — Lockhart. When Sir Simon Locard accompanied the good Sir James Douglas to Palestine, bearing the heart of Bruce in a locked case, on this account his name was changed to Lockhart, and he obtained for his armorial bearings a heart attached to a lock, with the motto, "Corde serrata pando." Engaged in the wars of the Holy Sepulchre, this hero had the good fortune to make a Saracen of rank his prisoner. The lady of the warrior came to pay his ransom, and was counting out the money, when she happened to drop from her purse a small jewel, which she immediately hastened to pick up with an air of careful solicitude. Lockhart eagerly inquired the nature of the jewel, and learning that it was a medicatory talisman, refused to deliver up his captive, unless it was added to the sum previously stipulated. The lady was obliged to comply, and Simon brought it home to Scotland, where it has ever since continued in the possession of his descendants, perhaps the only existing memorial of the crusades in this country. It is called *The Lee Penny*, on account of its being set in the centre of an old English coin. Triangular, or heart-shaped, it measures about the third of an inch each way and is of a dark red colour, but perfectly transparent. The nature, of the stone cannot be determined by lapidaries, being apparently different in all respects from any known in this quarter of the world. To the edge of the coin a small silver chain has been attached, and the whole is deposited in a gold box, which the Empress Maria Theresa presented to the father of the late Count Lockhart. The Lee Penny did not lose its talismanic property on being transferred to a country of Christians; on the contrary, it has been all along, even to the present day, remarkable for medical virtue, especially in the diseases of horned cattle. The mode of administering it is this:—Holding it by the chain, it is three times plunged into a quantity of water, and once drawn round—*three dips and a sweil*, as the country people express it—and the cattle and others drink of this water for the purpose of being cured. In the reign of Charles I., the people of Newcastle being afflicted with the plague, sent and obtained the loan of the Lee Penny, leaving the sum of £6000 sterling in its place as a pledge; and so highly impressed were they with an opinion of its sovereign virtues, that they proposed to keep it and forfeit the money, but the Laird of Lee would not consent, for any consideration, to part with so venerable and gifted an heir-loom. About the beginning

X.

In vain, 'twas said, might stern disease assail,
  Where'er the potent water found its way;
Nor spell of weird infernal might prevail,
  Nor e'en the water-dreading madness slay;
  Such were the dreams of man's untutored day,
And wizard, witch, wraith, ghost, and goblin drear,
  The spunkie, brownie, kelpie, and the fay—
A motley troop—have all held revel here,
All danced on Cartlane Crags; beheld and heard with fear.

XI.

It comes, it comes, the glorious march of mind!
  Children of darkness, whither have ye fled?
Ride ye sublime on chariots of the wind,
  Whom kindred haste to join with noiseless tread?
  Or in the land of shadows rest the head?
If so, heaven grant your slumbers be profound,
  May Silence keep her watch around the bed
Whereon ye rest—in sacred circle bound—
Oblivion's curtains closed eternally around.

of last century, it is said to have cured Lady Baird, of Saughtonhall, who having been bit by a mad dog, exhibited all the symptoms of hydrophobia. In his fine chivalric tale of "The Talisman," Sir Walter Scott has made an admirable use of this curious relic of antiquity. Strangers from all quarters still resort to Lee to view this celebrated gem, and the present worthy proprietor has adopted the idea of keeping an album, in which the names of visiters are recorded.—*Chambers.*

XII.

Assume not, Bigotry, thy withering look,
  Thy grim, self-righteous smile, or hollow sneer,
Nor search for names in Cant's fastidious book,
  For what has been believed or practised here;
  Scan thine own creed, thy cherished dogmas dear,
There, wert thou not with prejudices blind,
  Things as adverse to reason would appear—
To Nature's laws—to interests of mankind—
To all that God in love and mercy has designed.

XIII.

Where have I wandered in my reverie?
  List, lo! there Cora* strikes the astonished eye;
In one wild fit of frantic revelry
  The waves of Clutha tumble from on high,
  And all the deafening echoes round reply;

* CORA LINN.—The uppermost fall is Bonniton Linn, a cascade of about thirty feet in height. The next below is Cora Linn, where the water takes three distinct leaps, each apparently as high as that of Bonniton. Between these two falls the course of the water is prodigiously rapid and perturbed. Its channel is contracted, among rocks and precipices, and in some places it struggles through a chasm of not more than four feet in width. Its sides consist of walls of rock, equidistant and wonderfully regular, the jutting points of which are covered with natural shrubbery, and in whose crevices nestle numerous flocks of birds. Upon a rock above Cora Linn, on the southern bank of the river, stands a ruined castle, behind which is a middle-aged mansion, and behind which again there is a still more modern and splendid mansion-house, called *Corehouse*. A pavilion, erected above a century ago, stands on the opposite bank of the stream, as a station for observing the fall.—*Chambers*.

And hoary mists arise, and vapours bland,
  And radiance darting from the azure sky,
Bids the bright bow across the deep expand,
A path for fairy feet to trip from either strand.

XIV.

Whate'er of beautiful, sublime, or great,
  That either heart, or eye, or ear can crave;
The foaming waterfall's o'erpowering state,
  The threatening rock, the alcove, and the cave,
  The rifted tower that frowns above the wave,
The streamlet's song, the breath, the bloom of flowers,
  The melody of birds, that gay or grave,
Tell forth their loves or griefs among the bowers—
Are here, and much that wings can lend to langour's
    hours.

XV.

But musing thus on Nature's wonderous plan,
  Say, is it not of sadness and of pain
A source, to view the swift vain hours of man;
  While meaner things for centuries remain?
  Even so Eternal Wisdom did ordain;
'Tis therefore best, whate'er our state betide,
  Let us be wise, nor dare the heavens arraign,
The language shun of discontent or pride,
And where God's hand we trace let resignation guide.

The Sports of Fasten's-E'en in Kilmarnock.

I.

THE day was sleety, cauld, and doure,
Dame Nature's face was wan;
The noteless birds, wi' dowie cower,
Happed round the beilds o' man.
Yet young folks, wi' their new duds on,
And bawbees gathered lang,
Stood at the doors, while to the fun
The crowds were skelpin' thrang
And thick that day.

II.

'Twas Killie's far-famed Fasten's-E'en,
The fireside was my station,
Till ca'd a stanch auld-farrant frien',
Yclepeed Dan Observation.
"Come, Jack," said he, "we'll up the gate;"
Sae, trudgin' cheek-for-chow,
A' een and ears, awa' we set,
The motions o' the row
To note that day.

III.

We gained the Laigh Kirk's sacred fauld,
  Where sheep on Sunday gather;
And mony a solemn truth hear tauld,
  And mony an unco blether.
By this the fun was just begun,
    The multitude was roarin';
And up and down, and roun' and roun',
  The water-warks were pourin'
                Their store that day.

IV.

The Cross we wan, weel studded through
  Wi' mony a gazing gaper;
Men o' a' ranks, and women, too,
  Aye trump at every caper.
And mony a face was there, I wot,
  That showed the farce was pleasin';
But that, in Fortune's mill, they'd got
  A most tremendous squeezin',
                For mony a day.

V.

"Now," said my friend, "mark ye yon fish,
  "A' bloatit, bleart, and blinkin',
"And belly turned like some tun dish,
  "Wi' eatin' and wi' drinkin';

"He's laughin' at the grand stramash,
"And thinks he's safe frae harm."
Wi' that he got a noble lash,
Which douked his convex thairm
In style that day.

VI.

Jock Stewart took a pipe's comman',
Though for his neck 'twas risky,
And dealt it roun' wi' heavy han'—
Ye're sure it wasna whisky.
For had it been, he would, I ween,
Ta'en rather better care o't;
Nor, by his drouth, to ony mouth
Hae had ae drap to spare o't—
On that same day.

VII.

Out o'er the heighest house's tap
He sent the torrent scrievin';
The curious crowd aye nearer crap,
To see sic feats achievin'.
But scarcely had they thickened weel,
And got in trim for smilin',
When roun' the pipe gaed like an eel,
And made a pretty skailin'
'Mong them that day.

VIII.

Now here, now there, he took his mark—
  Now down, now up, he liftit;
And droukit some unto the sark,
  That hadna ane to shift it.
And aye the callans were as keen
  To stan' and get a blatter,
As they had Roman Cath'lics been,
  And it a' holy water
That fell that day.

IX.

Next strutted by a stranger Miss,
  In Fashion's finest glare,
Come into town to taste the bliss,
  And show and sell her ware.
But what can a' this din excite—
  This universal keckle?
We turned about, and Jock, for spite,
  Had spoiled her fishing tackle
Complete that day.*

X.

'Twere not an easy task to tell
  How many got a bathin';

* In our early days it was customary on Fasten's-e'en to use the fire-engines, or "water-warks," as described in the text; but, alas! with cockfighting, once prevalent on that day, and other incontrovertible proofs of the wisdom of our ancestors, it has joined "the things that were."

And what to shins and taes befel,
  To dogs and dandies' claithin'.
How many drones enjoyed the sight—
  How safe and snugly seated;
Or wi' what trifles, vain and light,
  Mankind will be elated
                On ony day.

XI.

But surely Killie's sons are blest,
  That hae sic fine diversions;
And rulers, using for the best,
  Unparalleled exertions.
Sic shinin' spires, and streets sae grand,
  Observatories bonny;
And burial-grounds,* that in the land
  Are not surpassed by ony—
                I'll swear this day!

XII.

Now closed this scene—and now the crowd
  Dispersed in a' directions;
While water-warks proclaimed aloud
  The pavement's imperfections.

* At the time this was written, in proportion to its inhabitants, perhaps no town in the United Kingdom had so limited a place of interment as Kilmarnock; and things of a very revolting nature were often witnessed.

And some gaed aff to slake their thirst,
  And get their cargo shippit;
We took the hint, amang the first,
  And into Joppa's slippit,
  To taste that day.

XIII.

There ca'd we roun' the cap wi' tent,
  Till, to the window veerin',
We saw a sight that might have sent
  The vera stanes a-sneerin'.
Of duddy boys, five hundred guid,
  And, in the front presidin',
Twa warlike chiels, in blue and red,
  As big as farmers ridin'
  To fair some day.

XIV.

The ane, a halbert shouthered high,
  And purse, breeks, shoon, an' bonnet,
Fit laurels for the victory,
  Hung splendidly upon it.
The ither beat the row-dow-dow,
  A wee, but wickit sinner;
And great temptations they, I vow,
  Held out to ilka rinner
  To stake that day.

XV.

The clock near three had turned about;
  We down the street gaed cockin',
To see our Councilmen march out,
  (Wi' reverence be it spoken;)
We stood at Johnny Fulton's door;
  And I maun gie confession,
Their ranks, and music placed before,
  A glorious procession
                Did mak' that day.

XVI.

"Now," cried a pigmy 'mang the crowd,
  "In vain my neck I've rackit,
"For faces, thought that see I would,
  "Wi' wit and wisdom packit:
"They're fish, nae doubt, wi' finer scales,
  "And redder 'bout the ginnels:
"That's a' the difference frae oursels,
  "Pale Misery's fated panels,
                "And hacks this day."

XVII.

It would take Lockhart, or Will Pum,
  Or some sic son of thunder,
To paint lang Harvey at his drum,
  And every ither wonder:

The bark of dogs, the bawl of boys,
  The sneer of mony a scorner,
That mingling rose, in one wild noise,
  As round by Mathie's corner
                They gaed that day.

XVIII.

Now folk sped thranger to the race
  Than e'er to kirk on Sunday;
And like a priest's, was ilka face,
  On Sacramental Monday,
When wi' his brethren hame he hies.
  And sees, a' spread before him,
A' glittering, in his fancy's eyes,
  The banquet for the quorum,
                Prepared that day.

XIX.

We joined the noisy, fickle flock,
  And heard, in quick succession,
"My heels!" "I say, ye jade, whar's Jock?"
  And mony a queer expression;
We scarce gat peepin' roun' about,
  So sairly were we battered,
Till on the course, amaist worn out,
  And a' wi' dirt bespattered,
                We stood that day.

XX.

Then opened full on ear and view
The congregated "rabble"—
The varied face—the dress—the hue—
The mingled gibble-gabble—
The *blackman*-wives*—the gingebread creels—
The maids for sale in braces—
And droves o' swankie kintra chiels,
Wi' their unmeaning faces,
And leuks this day.

XXI.

Here youngsters, throwing turf and clay,
Are scourin' roun' sae tricky;
"Almanacs for the present day,"
Are bawled by Johnny Mickie,†
There's Muirland, wi' his plaid and dog,
And Will M'Web, the weaver,
Right thin and blue about the lug,
Puir, persecuted shaver,
Here met this day.

XXII.

And yonder is a whisky-stan',
Whar, drinkin' roun' and crackin',

* Sellers of confections made of boiled treacle.
† A dealer in gingerbread, who traverses the race-course on Fasten's-e'en, calling out, "Almanacs for the present day; an' if ye canna read them, ye may eat them."

Are seen a squad; and there a ban'
Thrang down the fences breakin';
Anither core are jumpin' keen,
And strainin' nerve and muscle;
While some light-fingered lads are seen
Performin' in the bussle,
Fu' gleg this day.

XXIII.

Here mony a chiel, wi' gaudy coat,
Flegs by wi' unco bluster,
That, o' his ain, a guid grey groat
I'm sure could hardly muster.
See yon twa up their noses set,
Deep-read in roguish dealings,
As they, for every pound o' debt,
Could pay their twenty shillings,
Clink down this day.

XXIV.

Great flights o' foreigners are come,
Frae Fenwick's far dominions;
Men o' Beansburn—frae Stew'rton some,
That dwell 'neath L——w's pinions;
And frae beyon' whar Irvine roars,
The Riccartonians mighty;
An' tinkler bodies frae Kilmaurs,
That great and wonderous city,
Are here this day.

XXV.

Newmilns' dog-fechters hae come down,
Some squintin' through their glasses;
Wi' folks frae Darvel's lang-tailed town;
Tarbolton's lads and lasses;
Wild natives o' the Hurlford;
And Galston wabsters lazy;
And, frae the Crookedholm, a horde
O' woollen-spinners greasy—
Quite big this day.

XXVI.

An' mony mae the scene hae sought,
Owre troublesome to mention,
A' keen pursuin' *Mr. Nought*,
Wi' most profound attention;
Frae brawny chiels, aboon sax feet,
That sturdily can stab it;
To infants, at their mammy's teat,
Scarce far beyond a rabbit
For size this day.

XXVII.

Here some are crackin' loud o' Dun;
And some o' ane ca'd Rover;
And some o' Neil, that aft has won,
But now is fairly over;

Ithers of Brigton, Boyd, and King,
Discuss the several merits;
And ither "bloods" that, in the ring,
Hae shown their strength an' spirits,
On some sic day.

XXVIII.

And this we heard o' female talk—
"Yon's Maggy Featherbrainie,
"That aft, last year, in Rumpie's Walk,*
"Was heard and seen by many!
"And now she's tied to yon wee chap,
"Yon poukit-lookin' monkey;
"And got a young ane in her lap,
"And face as lang's a donkey—
"I'm sure this day!"

XXIX.

Quo blear-e'ed Meg tae fish-wife Jean,
"Is tat a beast or bodie?
"Was ever sic a creature seen,
"Sae tousy an' sae duddy?

* A shaded avenue in the vicinity of Kilmarnock House, now destroyed. In the summer months it was much frequented by persons of both sexes, and of all ages, and is associated in our own mind with some of the brightest images of life's morning dream.

"He'll be the king o' craw-deils a',
"Or may be, lass, wha kens,
"Some tailor's midden run awa',
"By help o' steam-machines,
"T' the race this day."

XXX.

"Ye muckle bletherin' goose," quo' Jean;
"Your middens an' craw-deils;
"Ye leuk as ye had pawned your e'en
"For whisky in Tam Neil's!*
"That's Tammie Raeburn o' the Ark,†
"Far prouder o' his rags
"An' tautit hair, than ony spark
"That by sae saucy wags
"New clad this day!"

XXXI.

But suddenly the scene is changed!
And, O! what preparation
To clear the course, and get arranged
The crowd in proper station.

* A noted "*howf*" of those necromancers who transform coats, shirts, shoes, &c., into what is falsely styled "cheap whisky."

† A person lately deceased in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock; who, in consequence of losing a lawsuit, lived unshaven and unshorn for nearly thirty years, nor changed his clothes during that period, with the exception of his linen.

"Stan' back! stan' back!" is bawl'd about—
Sic ruggin' and sic rivin'—
The big folks threaten, thump, and shout,
As they were at the drivin'
O' nowt this day.

XXXII.

At length they're in a kind o' square;
And a' the finer cattle
The inner-court claim as their share,
Nor mix wi' baser metal.
But if this spot by worth is got,
Some chiels hae ta'en their places,
That in the rear, I rather fear,
Maun show their gaucy faces,
And fronts this day.

XXXIII.

Now aff his duds ilk rinner flings,
And hands them to some crony;
While Expectation draws her strings,
And maks her motions mony:
She fixes some like Lot's auld wife,
Maks ithers fidgin' keen;
Sets some hearts wi' their holes at strife;
Some baith wi' mouth and e'en
Gars glowr this day.

XXXIV.

Awa' like *grews* behint poor puss,
They cleave the yieldin' ether;
Or clergy to some patron's house,
When dies a weel-paid brither.
An' aye the drum cries somethin' mair,
As won the tither course is;
And, O! what deep important stare
Hae a' the stick-armed forces,
On guard this day.

XXXV.

Now, Byron here himsel' would fail,
And Shakspere's muse would sink,
To justice do to this same tale,
And tell it o'er in clink:
What shouts came pourin' frae the ring,
How ilka birkie strained,
How, at the hindmost bout, lang King
Cam' in, wi' strength weel hained,
Like shot that day.

XXXVI.

And loud as winds and waters met
In Winter's mad convention,
A moon-struck congregation set
On schemes of sea-extension.

The crowd brak for the winnin'-post,
(O! grand important spat,)
And ran as life had been the cost;
Nor did they ken for what
It was that day.

XXXVII.

O, sirs! weel Robin Burns might say,
"Mankind's an unco squad;"
A wee thing lifts them up the brae,
A wee thing maks them sad.
The man they idolize this day,
The next they'll pelt wi' mud,
And stain his name wi' calumny,
And e'en would shed his blood,
Some ither day.

XXXVIII.

The second race might be our sang,
But 'twere a subject tame,
Just as the Psalms of David gang,
"Another of the same."
An' when 'twas owre, how through the yetts
And slaps, baith young and auld,
Just like as mony gimmer-pets
Frae some new-opened fauld,
Did break that day.

XXXIX.

An' how some crackit, crouse, and keen,
'Bout rinners and the race;
How wooers set the tryst at e'en,
And named the time and place;
How grannies led their oyes in han',
W' muckle dauds o' snap;
And wee anes, daubit wi' *blackman*,
Auld-farrant out the lap
Did keek that day.

XL.

And we might paint auld Killie town,
Would Phœbus gie's a heeze;
When ilka change-house made a soun',
Just like a byke o' bees;
But 'twould be folly great for folk
Withouten legs to rin;
Or bats an' owls at twal' o'clock
To try t' outstare the sun
Some simmer day.

XLI.

But now we maun the cap-stane fin',
For surely it is time,
Toom barrels mak' the maist o' din,
Weak bards the langest rhyme.

May Killie's sons, and bonny dames,
Be strangers lang to hardships,
And better luck attend their aims,
Than ever did my bardship's
By night or day.

Hughie Spiers, or the Wonder of the Nineteenth Century.

Ye sons of song, awake! arise!
Each power invoke in earth and skies;
Tune well your harps—hark! hark! Fame cries,
"A bard appears!
"Give place—he comes to take the prize—
"My Hughie Spiers!"

"Awake! awake! or soon ye'll mourn
Your fame eclipsed, your laurels torn,

Your palms away in triumph borne;
While, 'mid the cheers
Of thousands, with "exalted horn,"
Rides Hughie Spiers.

Bard of the wild Green Island,* thou
Hast got a match—a rival now;
Campbell lags on Parnassus' brow,
His hopes turned fears;
While stumping ower ilk height and howe
Gangs Hughie Spiers.

Auld England talks wi' timorous cheep
O' Shakspere wild, and Milton deep;
Greece, 'bout her Homer, darna peep;
Were they his peers?
Not fit the Pegasus to keep
O' Hughie Spiers.

No more Apollo will give heed
To Scott, the bard of knight and steed,
Or bid audacious Southey speed;
But laughs and jeers
At every sinner of the breed,
Save Hughie Spiers.

Venus ance tauld the god, of late
She heard some mortal had him beat;

* Moore.

Urged him to tell, until he flate,
And said, in tears,
Ye wanton jade, since ye maun hae't,
It's Hughie Spiers!

His name on every zephyr scuds,
'Tis heard in wilds and loneliest woods;—
Sweet Irvine—gentlest of our floods!
Fast onward bears,
To tell the ocean's guardian gods
Of Hughie Spiers.

Thou moon—meek mistress of the night!
Ye stars that roll in radiance bright!
Ye comets, whose revolving flight
Takes up whole years!
Rejoice in our poetic light—
Bright Hughie Spiers!

Sound him, thou sea! like thunder's roar
Lift thy deep voice along the shore—
The same let all on earth encore!
Meanwhile ye spheres,
As through the realms of space ye soar,
Sing Hughie Spiers!

Dogs, when they see him, wag their tails;
'Tis said whole packs forget the trails,

Nor aught the huntsman's voice avails ;
And when he nears
Steam carriages, they bid the rails
Shriek Hughie Spiers.

The flies that round his bardship bum,
His wondrous merits daily hum ;
Auld puss, at "twa threads an' a thrum,"
Her windpipe clears,
And bids the chorus rolling come
In Hughie Spiers.

When meditation leads his shanks
By sedgy pools and reedy stanks,
The paddocks lea' their plays and pranks,
And e'en their dears,
And come in crowds to gi'e their thanks
To Hughie Spiers.

At birth of this seraphic bard,
Things strange, they say, were seen and heard :
The sun rose east—grass decked the sward—
In gossips' ears
Doors on their oil-less hinges jarred
"O ! Hughie Spiers."

To aid his observation sly,
Nature has given a searching eye ;

Although his foes will this deny,
And say he wears
That of the mole, 'tis all a lie—
Gleg Hughie Spiers!

Besides, she has been pleased to place
In fairest mould his lovely face;
A visage marked with every grace
The hero bears!
O! could great *Jamie Thom** but trace
Our Hughie Spiers.

He has gi'en Vice an unco clip,
He made Miss Folly naked strip,
Fast held her in his mighty grip—
And Reason swears
She mended 'neath the sounding whip
O' Hughie Spiers.

Unlike some bards of modern time,
Who string their neighbours' faults in rhyme,
He soars amid the true sublime,
Nor ever veers
To aught that's low; 'twere darkest crime,
Says Hughie Spiers.

* The Sculptor of the group of "Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny."

Whene'er his mighty numbers flow,
Concord and strength attending go,
Grace, Ease, and Dignity, in Co.,
Jove, stooping, hears
The notes, and shouts—"Well done! bravo!
"My Hughie Spiers."

Come, Scotia! lift thy drooping head,
And leave poor Burns's lowly bed;
In thy best tartans be thou clad;
Dry up thy tears;
Shout! there's a brighter in his stead,
E'en Hughie Spiers.

The Tombs of the Douglases.

"So many, so good, as of the Douglass have been
Of one sirname, were ne'er in Scotland seen."
OLD SAYING.

I.

SHADES of the mighty, the illustrious dead,
Who can approach your venerable dust
And sigh suppress, nor tear of tribute shed?
Beholding all that human glory must
Become; the generous, the brave, the trust
Of prince and patriot in danger's hour,
Their arms have yielded to inglorious rust;
And those that never bowed to human power,
Are bound by Death, and mute within his noisome tower.

II.

The iron frames, the lion hearts of old,
Whose names, whose swords were in themselves a host,
Here meekly mingle with their native mould,

Frail as the arm of infant that ne'er crossed
The bourn of life, yet glorious as on coast
Of the far east descends the source of day,
They fell, they perished conquering; yea, when lost
His followers seemed, and dead the Douglas lay,
The dread, redoubted name was victor in the fray.*

III.

Here rests the dust revered of "good Sir James:"†
Stranger, if in thy heart lurks aught that's base,
One thought that with the craven kindred claims,
Withdraw from this thy sacrilegious gaze;

* Battle of Otterburne, fought 21st July, 1388.

† The following description of the gallant Sir James Douglas is from Barbour's "The Bruce." The old Scots poet need not have scrupled to have celebrated him as equal to Hector:

"He wes in all his dedis lele;
For him dedeyneit nocht to dele
With trechery, na with falset.
His hart on hey honour wes set;
And him contenyt in sic maner,
That all him luffyt that wer him ner.
Bot he wes nocht so fayr that we
Suld spek gretly off his beauté;
In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,
And had blak har, as Ic hard say;
Bot off his lymmys he was weill maid,
With banys gret, and schuldrys braid.
His body wes weyll maid and lenye;
As thai that saw hym said to me.
Quhen he wes blyth he wes lufty,
And meyk and sweyt in cumpany;
Bot quha in battaill mycht him see,
All other countenance had he.
And in spek wlispyt he sumdeill:
Bot that sat him rycht wondre weill.
Till guid Ector of Troy mycht he
In mony thingsis likynt be.
Ector had blak har, as he had:
And stark lymmis, and rycht weill maid;

Know, he was one that walked in Wisdom's ways,
And culled the fruits that art and caution yield;
Serene in peace as Cynthia's summer rays,
War's hottest thunderbolt in battle-field,
In dark, in dangerous days poor Caledonia's shield.

IV.

And Beauty, haughty, high-born Beauty, here
Disclaims the boasted triumphs of her eyes;
Lo! in that tomb where carvings quaint appear,
Perhaps the theme of ancient minstrel lies—
The pride of courts, who gave the envied prize
To valour's hand, and led the radiant dance
With steps of harmony, in all the dies
That form the rainbow's dazzling expanse,—
Her frown more dreaded far than sternest foeman's lance.

V.

But all have vanished,—O! mysterious state,
To which all subject are beneath the sun;
Time will not of his sweeping course abate,
And all must perish that he looks upon,—

And wlyspit alsua, as did he;
And wes fulfillyt of beawté;
And wes curtaiss, and wyss, and wycht.
Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
Till Ector dar I nane comper
Off all that euir in warldys wer."
JAMIESON'S BARBOUR, p. 14.

Crowns, thrones, towers, temples, all that have
been won
By arts, or arms, by science and by skill,
In vain may seek their destiny to shun,
Mountains shall fail, and earth at last stand still,
The sun, moon, stars, even cease their courses to fulfil.

VI.

O! for one hour of midnight's deepest noon,
When twinkling orbs their silent vigils keep;
And mourns the watch-dog to the pale, cold moon;
And weary winds through rents of ruin creep;
And mellowed comes the music of the deep,
Disturbed at times by owlet's dreary scream—
Here left to thought sublime, unseen to weep
O'er human grandeur's sublunary dream,
And gather lore to guide rapt Passion's wayward team.

Douglas, June 5, 1840.

On the Death of my Sister, Mrs. R. Parker.

"Now my days are swifter than a post."—Job ix. 5.

Our fellow-pilgrims, one by one,
  Are lost on life's declining way;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
  With changing looks and tresses grey;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the world is waxing old.

It seems of yesterday to be,
  When hand in hand we went to school;
Or gambolled on the daisied lea,
  Or watched the minnows in the pool;
And bliss from every object drew,
For all was beautiful and new.

It seems of yesterday to be,
  When looked we through the churchyard gate,
Our little kindred's graves to see;
  And though we distant deemed the date,

Each other viewed with sob and sigh,
And said, "We one day too would die."

It seems of yesterday to be,
  When in the long, dark winter night,
Beside our mother's wheel sat we;
  And clean the hearth, the fire was bright,
And she would sing some melting lay
Of men, of things long passed away,

And when the song or tale was o'er,
  What simple questions we would start;
Or on the fire intensely pore,
  With tearful eyes and lips apart;
Alas, that sweet, that soothing strain,
I'll never hear on earth again.

Upon my father's mouldering breast
  I've lived my mother's dust to lay;
The tongue that hushed us both to rest,
  Is silent and insensate clay.
That dreary path thou too hast gone,
And we must travel all anon.

It seems of yesterday to be,
  When at thy grandsire's knee thou stood,
With blossoms of the hawthorn tree,
  And wild flowers dewy from the wood:

And soft the good old man the while
Would stroke thy head, and fondly smile.

It seems of yesterday to be,
  When through the morning's dewy pane
The summer's golden light we'd see
  Gild the green hills, and distant main:
Those moments in their bright array,
O, God of goodness, where are they?

But where is all the bliss, the bane,
  The sunny hours, the deeds sublime;
The most that mortals may attain,
  In annals of departed time?
Earth's mightiest ones forgot at last,
Are swallowed in the boundless past.

And now, within the grave's embrace,
  Two little children by thy side,
Thou art, and six hast left to trace
  The world's rough shore, and stem its tide,
Through much unkindness, many a snare,
And all without a mother's care.

And should they meet those ills of life
  That rend the heart, and blanch the cheek,
Perhaps unequal to the strife,
  With eyes suffused unseen they'll seek

The spot where thou li'st lone and low,
To tell the senseless turf their woe.

Years shall away on viewless wing,
  The sky as bright, the earth as green,
And soon some laughing hour shall bring,
  When none shall know that thou hast been;
Perchance some one in passing by,
May say, "This dust once lived as I."

And is it all of life we gain,
  A gleam to light us to the grave?
A sigh, a tear, upon the main
  The crested foam, and ere the wave
On which it rides, has drunk the dies
Of light, 'tis lost to mortal eyes?

Yes, this is all, and 'tis a boon
  The Godhead hath in goodness given;
The dawning of that day whose noon
  Shall rise beneath His smile in heaven;
And brighter still, and brighter be,
Through ages of eternity.

'Tis ours to adore the great First Cause,
  To practice love to fellow-man;
To steer our course by Nature's laws,
  And spend with joy our little span;

The rainbow, butterfly, and flower,
Are beauteous in the fleeting hour.

Our fellow-pilgrims, one by one,
  Are lost on life's declining way;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
  With changing looks and tresses grey;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the world is waxing old.

A Fragment.

'Twas April,—bright and genial was the day,
Young dazzling clouds on azure pillows lay
Along the margin of the etherial plain,
Like sea-birds sleeping on the summer main;
The infant primrose reared its dewy head
With modest beauty from the mossy bed;
Nor far removed, on springlet's margin green,
The eldest daisy of the year was seen;
Buds the mild breeze with balmy odours blest,
And bright wings twittered round the half-formed nest.
The burn from Winter's iron bondage free,
Leaped, laughed, and sang to join the mighty Dee,
That down impetuous from the mountains rolled,
And his wild strength in haughty murmurs told;
For Spring had called, and Nature heard her voice,
And bade all subjects of her realms rejoice.

Where Cairnsmuir lifts its hoary head on high,
Oft crowned with snow beneath the summer sky,

And ofttimes halts the general of the storm,*
The dreadful phalanx of his strength to form;
Ere fiery messengers have given the host
Command to scour the Gallovidian coast;
I passed, a pilgrim to that sacred height†
Whence Lowe's wrapt spirit plumed her wings for flight,
To soar with Fancy through her boundless sway,
And earn a crown impervious to decay.

And when meridian beams began to fail,
And lengthening shadows intersect the vale,
Embossed in sterile hills of darkest hue,
The loch of Kenmure burst upon the view,
A giant gem, by Nature rudely set,
When all her hostile energies were met.

New Galloway, April, 1842.

* When Cairnsmuir gets on his hat,
Criffle he soon will hear of that.
—OLD PROVERB.

† Airds, parish of Kells, stewartry of Kirkcudbright, sometime the residence of Lowe, author of "Mary's Dream."

A Dream.

I know some people will be apt to say,
  I've here been dabbling too much in the unseen;
'Tis just what bards have done in every day,
  In short what constitutes their grand machine;
Bigots will cry, I'm on Destruction's way;
  I'm sure Job's friends their ancestors have been:
Go, patch your own, ere point ye at my breeches,
And learn more love and charity, ye wretches.

When deep sleep had fallen on the frail sons of men,
And the beast of the forest roamed far from his den;
The owl was abroad in the wide troubled sky,
And joined with the spectre his horrible cry;
The murderer laboured with birth of a prayer,
Still blown from his lips by the breath of Despair;
'Twas then as I sank into needful repose,
In vision before me distinctly arose
The dark river Styx, with its deep sable tide,
Old Charon, the ghosts, and grim Pluto beside;
And all combinations, invented so well
By bards of far ages, distinguished as hell.

The old boat was plying, the shadows were landing,
And round the stern monarch in thousands were
standing,
And far down below in the gulph there were seen,
The sinners condemned at the bar that had been;
On banks of the river the grim fiends were watching,
And runaways quick as the lightning were catching!
And deep was the wail—O! the howling was dire,
That rose o'er the surge of the deep rolling fire,
Which roared in red caverns concealed from the view,
And hissed on the hot shore in long billows blue.

The first I saw landed, a herald declared
He once was a farmer in place called the Aird;
A rough-spoken, reckless, and frolicksome youth,
But generous as Nature, and honest as truth.

"Ay, ay," said old Pluto, "I knew 'twould be so,
"And have looked for thee, Sandy, a long time ago;
"What news from blythe Ayrshire? I'm glad that she
can,
"At times, send us down some respectable man."

"But, landlord," said Sandy, "come bring us our bill;
"And mind, at the same time, your own stirrup-gill."
Then Pluto addressed his grand Council a-sitting,
Saying, "What d' ye think for our friend is best fitting?

"Let some easy task to the soul be assigned;
"He had faults, but was one of the best of mankind;
"My opinion it is, that on banks of this river,
"On Creeping Kate's* ghost he shall canter for ever.
"The journey is long, and requires a 'bit taste,'
"But Hopkin† at head of yon hill shall be placed;
"Johnny St***e,‡ of the Sun, in the course of a day,
"Shall open an inn at the foot of that brae;
"The bard of old Killie another shall keep
"Between them, half-way, by yon sulphery steep."
'Twas agreed; and away at a signal Kate flew,
And showed by her pace that her rider she knew.

A bard landed next, and this whisper was passed
In Council, "So Charon has yielded at last."
"Yes; yielded," said Pluto, "what else could he do?
"Apollo's proud sons are a pennyless crew;
"From days of Dan Homer, but few of the band
"Are blessed with sufficient to pay the demand."
Then laughing, he cried, "Look, ye powers, what a pack
"Of bills his poor bardship has got on his back;
"All known to the 'limbs of the law' when above.
"Yes, 'foul' every one, by the sceptre of Jove;
"There's one at the top (if I credit my senses),
"Shows twenty pounds paid, with near ten of expenses.§

* A mare of great speed and bottom, once the property of S. and killed on Paisley course.
† An innkeeper at whose house S. was in the habit of calling.
‡ Ibid.
§ This is no phantom of the imagination.

"Poor devil, from all I can gather, 'tis clear
"He's been tortured enough before coming here."
"What shall we do with him?" the Council exclaimed;
"Your Majesty's laureate let him be named;
"With his house at the half-way, and harp, he'll be busy;
"At least he will think so, for bards are aye lazy."
As flies from the bow the winged child of the quiver,
Went the bard to his station,—his station for ever.

The next that appeared in the crazy old boat,
Was questioning Charon what fish might be got
In streams of the Styx; cried old Pluto, "Be still;
"Here comes (but how pale) my good friend Drumley-hill;
"I doubt he's been drowned in a fishing excursion;
"Or else at Newmilns in a Baptist immersion!"

By this Drumley reached the Tartarian coast,
And looked with a leer upon each stranger ghost:
"It strikes me," said he, as he touched the long shore,
"I'll have some diversion with this kittle core."
Diversion—was caught by the crowd round the throne;
Diversion—aloud by the heralds was blown;
'Twas heard far and wide. From the tarns, from the lakes,
The lone blazing isles, and the deep brimstone brakes,
And rifted volcano's terrific abode,
Came hosts of Tartarians,—they ran and they rode,
To meet and to welcome this mirth-seeking guest,—
Confused was the Council, and Pluto distressed.

From cliffs and from caves of the mountains eternal,
Sailed forth startled flocks of the prey-birds infernal,
With wings wide as mainsails in armies they passed,
And swooped, curled their talons, and screamed on the
blast.

'Twas much like a night in the dread torrid zone,
When forth in his strength the tornado has gone;
And loud as the peal of the thunder bursts there,
O'er waters, and winds, and the shrieks of despair;
At length, in this speech did grim Pluto prevail,
And all else was hushed but the rock's dying tale.

"I will that this shadow be left at his ease,
"To wander, and note what he hears and he sees;
"To fish, course, or shoot, or at times take a game
"At quoits, or at cards, as his fancy may claim.
"But to curling he must bid a final adieu,
"That point called the 'freezing' our glass never
knew."
'Twas agreed; and away o'er the country uncomely,
As light as the breeze flew the shade of old Drumley!

A shout, mixed with laughter, now rose long and loud,
And fast to the ferry was gathering a crowd;
For the ghost of a gardener just had come there,
A hundred of thorns on his shoulder he bare;
From Killie he was, looked dejected and ill,
Some said he died drinking, some paying a bill;

Some said that the bailiffs had put out his breath;
Some said (the most like) he was slandered to death;
Be that as it may, still, a sad thing was sure,
Like most from that town he had come away poor,
And stood begging Charon to ferry him o'er
For payment in plants! but, O! heavens how he swore;
By charms of Proserpine, he never would stand
Such cursed contempt of the laws of the land:
"And, Pluto," said he, "you are nought but a drone,
"Who can witness such things and yet sit on your throne:
"A throne to which every one here has as good
"A right as yourself, if 'twere well understood;
"While I must eternally labour for you,
"The only 'producer' among the whole crew;"
Then something he muttered of "rights" and a "charter,"
Of "physical force," and "the death of a martyr."

But Pluto smiled grimly—he knew all above—
The fixed laws of Fate, and the flat of Jove;
And seeing by this time the gardener land,
Cried, "Let us proceed with the business in hand.
"This chap has well worshipped at Venus's shrine,"
He said; "nor great Bacchus has deemed less divine.
"Most strange! but it is so; these deities cast
"Their ardent adorers on us at the last:
"Poor sinner, we'll send him his thorns to plant
"By Alcohol Fountain, his late partner's haunt;

"Who still as a shadow his steps shall attend,
"And pull as he plants, during time without end."

The Council confirmed—Saunders shouldered his thorns,
Retiring like one that is cursed with the corns;
The souls in the deepest abyss squinted after;
And, spite of their pangs, were distorted with laughter.

A silence ensued,—when the herald's loud note
I heard, and again saw a shade in the boat;
All eyes to the ferry then quickly did turn—
Cried Pluto, "Here's one from, I think, 'Howlet Burn.'
"Behold, in the boat he sits easy inclined;
"And laughs at his horse, Patie, swimming behind.
"'Tis an age of new things, and sure this is one,
"But Fate best determines how such should be done!
"Decide on his sentence—come do not be slow,
"For Jamie is aye in a hurry, I know."

Then rose in the Council a figure as dark
As sky of that day Noah entered the ark,
Saying, "Friends, I do think, and with me ye'll agree,
"This gent here our keeper of forests shall be."

"A good thought," said Pluto; "and if that he brings
"His conduct to clash with our system of things,
"He may visit at St***e's for a short relaxation,
"And toast his old friends in Tartarian potation.

It seemed in the Council the general feeling—
"I'm off, then," said Christie, and Patie was squealing.*
Away then they darted, but soon halted under
Alternate impressions of terror and wonder.

There rose the great mountains some thousand miles
high,
Here yawned gulphs so deep, the most far-sighted eye,
Though aided with glass of great Herschell, could never
Discover the bottom, though gazing for ever.
And plains I beheld, to which ocean would seem,
And earth, but a moth in the sun's summer beam;
There grew the great forests of brimstone and lava—
Their breath more destructive than Upas of Java;
And demons sat there, as the wild birds at rest,
By travellers seen in the woods of the "west."
While storms clapt their pinions careering along,
And chaunted with Wo and Destruction their song;
And grisly gaunt phantoms contending in ire,
Hurled infant volcanos from mortars of fire.
And far in the midst, on a huge frowning rock,
I beheld, what appeared as of vultures a flock;
These were Bigotry's curst, pestilential division,
Set up there for hell's everlasting derision.
And round the rough sides of that rock there were hung
Whole clusters of demagogues, each by the tongue;
Yet still the same spirit they held as in time,
And practised their art, though 'twas now pantomime.

* A habit the horse had when mounted.

As down a high hill at the top of his speed
Our forester went, crying, "Queer place, indeed;"
In the nursery of Pluto, encircled that lay
With the high tossing waves of a phosphorus bay,
He beheld his old friends, to their hard task assigned,
One planting, the other still pulling behind.
"Huzza!" shouted Johnny, "Huzza!" he replied,
'Till the sound of his horse in the distance had died;
But Saunders cried after, "What means all this haste?
"Come stop, Jamie, stop, till we hae a bit taste."

Now faded each figure of shade and of light,
That the phantoms composed of the kingdom of night;
And the sway of sweet reason all brightly returning,
I arose to the toils and the cares of the morning.

An Adventure.

"And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth."—1 SAMUEL xxviij. 13.

It was in eighteen thirty-nine,
The month of June, the weather fine;
But so confounded hot,—'bout Ayr
Mad dogs were running here and there—
Mad politicians everywhere.

One afternoon of this same time,
A brewer, smith, and man of rhyme,
Rather a kind of kittle set,
In the Turf Inn of Irvine met,
And drove the joke a while, and tale,
Over a jug of Geordie's ale.

Whether it was the mania then
That in the shire struck dogs and men;
Or, whether 'twas the fumes of ale
That in their craniums did prevail,

Must under covert still remain,
Till some intelligence we gain,
By steam conveyance, or balloon,
From that queer planet called the moon;
Howe'er, to Jenny Hooks* they'd go,
And learn their fortunes—weal or wo!

'Twas fixed upon—a house was got
Contiguous to the beldam's cot;
And soon did Jenny 'mong them stand,
With pregnant look, and cards in hand.

His bardship was her first essay—
But Jenny, Jenny, well-a-day!
Thou could'st not have been farther wrong
Had'st thou declared that old was young,
That black was white, that east was west,
That Satan was a heavenly guest!

The roguish rhymster blew her still
With words of wonder at her skill;
And swore by Burns's soul, she'd been
At night with Nick upon the green;
And had she lived in times of old,
When earth was Superstition's fold,

* A notorious character of the Endor school, to whom persons of all classes resort. So much for the boasted intelligence of the nineteenth century.

Had been condemned to end her days
Amid the faggot's horrid blaze.

The son of Vulcan next would know
How Fate had laid his lot below,
And cut the cards—whose dirty leaves
First told he was beset with thieves;
Who knows not that;—'tis my belief
The world is just one giant thief;
And could with ample demonstration
Substantiate the observation.

Next, Fortune's favours came along
So quick, so heavy, and so throng,
They trode each other's heels, and cried,
"Come, devil take you, stand aside,"—
Things that are like to come to pass
When o'er the planets grows the grass;
Or, drunk with tippling over night,
The sun forgets the world to light;
"But time would fail to tell of all,"
As saith my friend, the Apostle Paul.

By this the brewer 'gan to think
Sans hops and malt was Jenny's drink;
He proferred not the powerful pelf,
When Jenny looked her horrid self;

With withering glance the group surveyed,
Rose, tossed the glass—her exit made!

But now the glorious things with which
The smith's futurity was rich,
Produced by Jenny's magic slight,
In all their galaxy of light,
As wax the man of iron made—
He home was on a cart conveyed.

O muse! ye jingling jilt, fie shame,
Tell truth for once—"the smith was lame."

* * * *
* * * *

That stately youth, with giant force,
That there restrains the fiery horse;
First at the sports of summer's e'en,
That shake the sod of village green;
And round the glowing winter hearth,
The lifestring of the rustic mirth;
Nor will the precedency yield
To one in labours of the field.

His fair was coy, as fair will prove
Sometimes, when deepest drowned in love;
Beneath th' eclipse he sought for guide
The wily witch of Irvine's side.

And mark that venerable man,
Conspicuous ever in the van
Of those that seek the house of prayer,
And long an office-bearer there,—
His goods were stolen. With truth 'tis said,
He sought notorious Jenny's aid,
And rushed against the threefold fence,
Of Scripture, Reason, Common-sense.

Irvine, the Virtues long have made
Their bowers within thy sheltering shade!
What! sermonizing?—lift thine eye
And scan that fair one passing by,
In all the pageantry and power
Of youth and beauty's noontide hour.

Yes, Art and Nature both have played
Their freaks to form the matchless maid;
Even on that high brow's beauteous swell
The amorous sunbeam loves to dwell;
Or, through the silken shade will peep,
Like lover o'er his idol's sleep:
Those bright blue eyes might be the theme
For life of minstrel's raptured dream,
New charms disclosing day by day,
As fled the swift, sweet hours away.

That swimming majesty of tread,
That air, that symmetry, might wed

The misanthrope to ways of men,
The hermit to the world again;
Yea, and beneath that hand of snow,
The bright designs will sometimes glow;
She sings, 'tis as if angel gave
To earth the music of a wave
Of harmony, from that great sea—
Companion of eternity.
Yet this accomplished, peerless queen,
Hath also with the beldam been.

O, man! of all things here we see
Thou art the greatest mystery;
Thou chaos in contention dipt,
Thou heterogeneous nondescript;
God's word and Nature's law aside
Are set, as inclinations guide;
And spite of every high pretence,
The child art thou of circumstance.

Ye who profess the creed sublime,
That man shall, at some future time,
Divest him of his native will
To shun the good, and seek the ill,
And by his own intrinsic aid
Arise, in moral light arrayed:
Turn, in your intellectual pride,
Survey the witch of Irvine's side!

Paterson's Attempt on the Temple of Fame.

In that same year that Navarinian Ned
Sent Turks to Mahomet by hundreds home,
I saw in vision, slumbering on my bed,
High on a cliff, a fair and goodly dome;
Steep was the way that to its portals led,
Up which the sons of men would sweat and foam;
'Twas called the Temple,—dwelling-place of Fame,
Where with a favoured few reposed the lofty Dame.

Methought some guardian spirit of the place
Bore me aloft upon his sounding wings,
And set me in the court-yard's ample space,
Far o'er this scene of sublunary things.
And, O! how many of the human race,
Goaded by wild ambition's serpent stings,
Strained up th' ascent, with danger, toil, and pain;
Were still repulsed, and still returned again!

Others, although with mighty trouble, wrought
Themselves at length into this splendid mansion,
Were cheered by those within, who, no doubt, thought
They had to it a something of pretension;
For these a crown the smiling goddess brought,
Of never-fading flowers of fair expansion;
And every class had marked a separate entry,
Kings, Heroes, Bards, and all such other gentry.

Down on a long, long, well-worn seat, that stood
Nigh to the door where went the sons of verse in,
I sat, and, with the jealous, selfish brood,
Expected soon to see some little farcing.
I heard 'twas long before the goddess would
Ope unto any—kept them there rehearsing;
And, out of pity, during the probation,
Had found that form for their accommodation.

Scarce had I occupied my seat an hour,
When, lo! a sound of laughter and wild mirth
Burst from within; while, like a thunder shower,
All to the windows sudden rushing forth,
Coughed, sneered, huzzaed, and hooted all their power;
And what to such strange merriment gave birth
Was, that a surgeon-bard, despite the porter,
Had passed the gate,—his Pegasus a mortar.

Whose strong right hand a ponderous pestle bore,
With which his steed he laboured till it rang,
And, undismayed, amid the vast uproar,
In strains like those of bedlamite, still sang.
His face had something I've ne'er seen before,
Except in folks that are, as some say, "wrang;"
As for his nose, 'twas like a ripe wall-cherry
Pecked by a blackbird—or a big strawberry.

His satellites this luminary had:
And this, I learned, was their determination,
That though they murdered Truth, and put Fame mad,
They'd take possession of her habitation.
Their picture true would make a sexton sad—
The real cast-off sons of dissipation;
Mere tippling, shirtless, coinless, would-be fops,
That daily scandal deal in ill-frequented shops.

One on the front, whose name was Puny Paul,
Held a high place 'mong that enlightened crew:
Purveyor of medicines he was withal,
And poet-laureate to a well-known stew:
Along his cheek was marked the midnight brawl,
In traits conspicuous to the slightest view;
Aye, his whole look and visage were as evil
As he had been vicegerent for the Devil!

In bare, but well-brushed trousers, coat, and hat,
With shirt scarce reaching to his collar-bone,

Followed the next, who, by the name of *Bat*,
Among the sad fraternity was known;
He whirled a cane—had seals, no watch thereat—
His boots with Warren's blacking brightly shone,
Though, by their hollow, loud, and empty knockings,
They told the stones his feet were void of stockings!

In widow's weeds of tasteless disarray,
Next in procession came a stately dame;
Though tricky Time had marred her locks with gray,
Proud was her air, and quick her eye of flame.
And much there told she'd rather do than say;
Her sons were numerous, nor unknown to Fame;
As for her daughters, I some few have seen,
To whom Diana might a handmaid been.

Old Killie she was called, who ne'er had yet
A son who, with success had swept the lyre;
And this was one adopted, in a fit
Of fondness did she with the rest conspire
To hoodwink Fame, but now 'twas plainly writ
On all she did she rather would retire;
There was a sad, sad something in her mien
I liked not, yet have in a bridegroom seen.

Last came a lout of most unmeaning face,
Works of the bard he carried in his hand,
And which he hinted, with a queer grimace,
He was to circulate throughout the land.

Yet from the whole, I easily could trace,
Self did supreme in 's estimation stand;
And where he lacked address and penetration,
The vacancy was filled with affectation.

With these, and more 'twere dangerous to describe,
Our daring hero safely passed the portal,
Trumpet procured from herald, by a bribe,
And ranked his name among the bards immortal.
Then what a riot rose among the tribe,
Eager they seemed, and keen at the retort all;
Bawled Burns, above the rest, "Do ye no ken,
"The proverb says, 'Self-praise comes stinkin' ben.'"

Still, all unconscious of their wrath and din,
He only listened to the other band
Echo his tale; then, with important grin
Looked round, esteem and notice to command.
The real attitude he then was in,
If fitly drawn, would be a treat most grand;
I've never yet beheld such selfish stare,
Such bold, presumptuous, unbecoming air.

Betwixt the ground and knocker of the door,
Vast was the distance; therefore, all that came
Had steps to furnish and set up before
They reached it—such the stern decree of Fame.
With stuff that other bards had used of yore,
Our nondescript began his work to frame—

From Campbell, Burns, and Byron stole a share,
And joined it with his own most miserable ware.

From a long list, too troublesome to quote,
He pilfered keenly. From religion, too,
Borrowed a deal: whilst he, in inward thought,
Laughed loud at every thing of serious hue.
His allied powers, with zeal now burning hot,
Rushed forward—set him on the fabric new—
When, lo! he popped down through it in a trice,
As folks do sometimes when they take to ice.

Out rushed a watchman, as the goddess bade,
And of our bardship's collar took a catch;
Said, he believed, that since the world was made,
It ne'er produced such sacrilegious wretch;
Told him how far he had mista'en his trade,
And, of conviction to undo the latch,
He beat him, kicked him, flogged him with a switch,
And gave his scurvy nose a most tremendous twitch!

Down gushed the black contaminated gore,
Like streams of tar beneath the solar ray,
And scarce five seconds had elapsed, before
It vermin grew, took feet, and ran away;
A peal of laughter shook the temple o'er,
And next a long and deafening huzza;
Then crammed each sash was, as in expectation
Of execution, or a coronation.

"Begone!" cried Goldsmith, "bare-faced, dirty thief!"
"Not fit," quoth Moore, "to wash the dishes here!"
"Of scribblers and of plagiarists the chief,"
Said Byron; "hence! feed pigs, and share their cheer!"
"Awa'!" quoth Burns, "this house is scribbler prief—
"We're needing nane o' Esculapius' gear!"
Tom Campbell said, "'Tis fruitless here to cope,
"There is not for thy case a single ray of hope!"

By this our hero and his comic group
Had reached the confines of the farthest gate;
When Justice called the disappointed troop,
And said, "'Twas his inevitable fate,
"'Twas true (she owned), they might despair and droop;
"But she had seen him get his proper weight;
"And that, as said somewhere beyond Ezekiel,
"Could state, on oath, the whole amount was—Tekel."*

Perhaps the greatest of the farce was yet
To come, but 'tis not in my power to tell—
Before my eyes the figures seemed to flit—
I woke with ringing of the morning bell.
But, as for what I have already writ,
'Tis quite correct, for I was watching well;
One special evidence can still be seen,
His bardship's nose, whose wound is yet quite green.

* Daniel v. 27.

On the Death of Mr. George Osborne.

THE storm o'erhangs the barren hill,
  And cold winds sweep the moorlands bleak,
While Nature stands with tresses torn,
  And tears congealed upon her cheek;
And lifts the wood its lonesome voice,
  Nor seen is living creature, save
The dismal owl, while sad and slow
  I follow Irvine's winding wave.

Again, again, another tie,
  That bound me to the vision vain
Of life, and every phantom joy,
  Is all untimely snapt in twain;
A light, that o'er my weary path
  Has often shed a cheering ray,
Till brighter prospects rose around,
  Is set, alas! and set for aye.

That deep, dark eye, so rich in soul;
  O, is its magic ever gone?
How in the social hour it glowed,
  How o'er the page of genius shone.
And is that heart now still and cold
  Within the kingdom of Decay,
Once open as the breath of morn,
  And generous as the dews of May?

Yes, gone to join the things that were,
  Which come at Memory's lofty call,
And in bright garbs of vanished days,
  Pass pageant through her hallowed hall.
Lo, they advance, and numbers there,
  That once with me life's pathway trod,
Pass, and, with sad and warning air,
  Point to the churchyard's pregnant sod.

The hedgerow bank and mossy brae
  Remain the same as when we pressed
Their verdant sides, and sought the flower,
  Or treasure of the wild bee's nest.
The hoary trunk of ancient tree,
  Still stands conspicuous in the wood,
Where first, with fluttering hearts, we viewed
  The little songster's tender brood.

Sweet scene of many an hour of bliss,
  The tiny brook, the wimpling burn,

Their waters still flow on the same,
  Their banks the same at every turn.
Still as eternal smiles the cliff,
  As when the ivy first we drew
From its proud base, or gathered there
  The ring-dove's feathers wet with dew.

But, O! how sadly, sadly changed,
  The language that they now impart,
In meditation's solemn hour,
  Unto the sear, the withered heart!
Loves, hopes, and joys for ever fled,
  I tread alone the path of wo,
And mark with faded vision still
  The shades that thicken as I go.

Again, again, another tie,
  That bound me to the vision vain
Of life and every phantom joy,
  Is all untimely snapt in twain;
A light, that o'er my weary path
  Has often shed a cheering ray,
Till brighter prospects rose around,
  Is set, alas! and set for aye.

Evening Meditations on the Heights of Dundonald.

I.

How sweet the summit of yon lonely hill,
And naked forest's wild and wintery roar;
The deep-toned music of the vagrant rill,
That leaps from cliff to cliff in fragments hoar;
The sea and sky as far as sight can soar,
And fading landscape's melancholy bloom,
Where, from a thousand domes, the lights once more
Through the dim shade their wonted paths resume,
And variegate the scene, and twinkle through the gloom.

II.

The peaceful sounds that wait on evening's train,
From rock to rock pass lingering along,
And melt melodious on the sighing main,
That, cold and dark, obstreperous and strong,
Spreads his deep waters; sweet the sea-bird's song
Strays o'er these shores, that heard, in days remote
From Rome's imperial powers, or feudal throng,
Destruction's trumpet, through her brazen throat,
Pour to contending hosts the war-arousing note.

III.

And list! the anvil's ever-echoing knell,
Broke by the breeze,—the village evening hum,
The partridge chirping through the dreary dell,
While loud reports from distant sportsmen come;
Irvine's deep moan, now sinking slowly dumb,
Now rising hoarse, as sudden shifts the gale—
The clattering wheels—and in the dusk still some
Laborious rustic whirls his sounding flail,
And far off tells the deep his everlasting tale.

IV.

Now lost the churchyard, gone the tombstones grey,
That silent, teaching, tributary band,
That 'gainst Oblivion's powers, of black array,
O'er the green graves, like watchful sentries, stand;
And many a sigh and holy throb command,
When Sabbath summons round the house of prayer
Her crowds promiscuous, and with olive wand
Charms every sound that swims along the air,
And bids each spot around a heavenly aspect wear.

V.

Spring yet shall glad these weary, wasted plains,
This moaning hawthorn deck with blossoms fair,
Call up to keen activity the swains,
And ope the primrose in the noontide glare;
The village youth their summer sports shall share;

Yon sea, so fierce, with dimple scarce be curled,
  But to these tombs no change shall tidings bear,
Till earth behold the Archangel's wings unfurled,
And the loud trumpet's voice awake a slumbering world.

VI.

Obscure the spot, and far removed from fame,
  No regal sepulchre is here arrayed,
Yet, as I pass, a sigh 'twill sometimes claim,
  For here a grandsire's aged dust is laid;
  Around whose knees, in infant hours, I've played,
And felt beyond the muse's power to sing,
  When bowed the hoary patriarch, and paid
His due devotions to the Almighty King,
Or when with heartfelt strains the rustic dome would ring.

VII.

O! 'mid these wilds had fortune placed my cot,
  And bade me daily 'mong their charms to stray,
Climb the grey hill, from revelry remote,
  And mark the morning bursting into day,
  The seasons rise and softly steal away,
And oft my harp be tuned at fall of night;
  When age should come—cold age—and dull decay,
To find a grave in yonder solemn site,
With hopes to rise and shine in everlasting light!

VIII.

Ye mighty oaks, that smile at ocean's blast,
With ivy circled, where the ring-dove rears
Her brood secure,—ye shaggy mountains, cast
In Nature's throes, where time a thousand years
Has wrote,—thou tower, that dim afar appears,
Where feudal lords in olden time would dwell;
Ye rocks, that shine with evening's crystal tears,
And mournful echo yonder village bell,
Night calls me to my home—dear scenes of youth,
farewell!

On the Death of Mr. Hugh Adam, Student.

FEBRUARY 25, 1825.

FAIR morn awakes, and from the opening sky
The vanquished shadows of the dawning fly;
She comes, new-born! and from her purple wings
A thousand beauties o'er the welkin flings;

She comes!—proud perched among his listening dames
Shrill through the sleepy town the cock proclaims;
With waning splendour sinks the morning-star,
The watch-dog's voice howls mournful from afar,
The zephyr sullen sighs above the dead,
As o'er the churchyard pensively I tread.

O Time! what changes wait on every wave
As roll thy billows to their boundless grave;
Things of a day, we deck thy destined shore,
Thou mov'st—we perish—and are seen no more.

Sometime the tenant of yon humble sod
Youth's flowery vales and sunny mountains trode;
Enchanting Hope her prospects spread around,
Wide as the deep in sky-formed circle bound;
Bright as the beam that lights the Christian's eye,
About in triumph of his faith to die;
But all his fled, like phantom of a dream,
Or midnight meteor's transitory gleam.

Cold is that breast where Independence dwelt,
Where Reason ruled, and conquered Passion knelt,
Where love to mankind reigned without control,
And every noble feeling of the soul.
And closed in death, and dim as sister clay,
The eye that beamed with friendship's purest ray;
Silent the tongue whence sweet instruction flowed,
Or harmless mirth, as duty marked the road.

No more we'll meet around the evening blaze,
When withering winter leads the stormy maze,
Chills the bleak wilds, and o'er the mountains white
Drops with a frown the dark and lonesome night;
There search some page of modern work sublime,
Or records rescued from the wrecks of time;
And bid, before the intellectual eye,
The men, the things of other days, pass by;
Or Vice behold portrayed in picture true,
Stript of her charms, and naked to the view;
Produce, for general weal, whate'er of lore
The closing week had added to our store;
Bid all our sparks in one combustion glow,
And in one stream our little streamlets flow;
While in each breast Joy waked her transports wild,
And Virtue silent o'er the circle smiled;
The hours that ushered Sabbath's solemn day,
With pleasure winged, fled unperceived away.

No more when mists the twilight world invest,
And Ocean's sounds rise gently in the west,
We'll seek the fields, and on some spot reclined,
Where round the wild flowers wanton in the wind,
In converse sweet indulge, or raptured trace
The wonderous charms of Nature's fairy face.
No more with weary feet we'll scour the plain,
The forest green, the margin of the main;
No more indulge the soul-inspiring view
From old Dundonald's shaggy hills of blue.
No more shall Study find thee in her bower,
Pale o'er the taper of the midnight hour,

Far on the cliffs where Learning's blossoms blow,
Whence looks the world contemptible below.
But O, how passing sad to wander o'er
The dear, dear past, and add to all—no more;
The bliss recalled from which we ever part,
Falls with a signal sorrow on the heart.

And thee I mourn in vain, whom fell decay
Snatched, ere meridian hour of life, away;
In minds of friends and relatives shall long
Live when forgotten is my humble song.

And when life's fitful taper has expired,
Its last faint flickerings from this scene retired,
To meet in new existence be it ours,
Nearer to God, with more exalted powers!

Written in Whalley Abbey, Lancashire.

JUNE, 1843.

O'ER the dark desert of departed Time,
Imagination takes her lonesome flight,
And lo! the past in majesty sublime
Appears, arrayed in hues of life and light.
'Tis vesper hour, and wold, and woodland height,
And shadowy hills are waxing dimly grey;
The convent gathers to the solemn rite—
Beneath the lofty roof they bend, they pray—
Now, hark! the music swells, now softly dies away.

Of ghostly fathers, what a goodly band!
Some forms to fasting little are allied;
And some the learned, the pious of the land,
Some that have stemmed the battle's stormy tide,
Some look with less of piety than pride,

Some gallants, too, albeit their locks of snow,
For whatsoe'er we choose to be our guide,
Whatever gilding o'er ourselves we throw,
'Tis human nature, oft unchanged, that lies below.

But who is she beside yon marble tomb
That kneels, a study for the sculptor's art?
Though but in opening of her beauty's bloom,
Grief bade the splendours of the rose depart.
Her laden eye tells anguish of the heart,
That well of soul of azure's purest hue,
Like violet in wilderness apart,
The harebell filled with morning's mountain dew,
Or summer's cloudless sky, o'er ocean's boundless view.

The lady weeps; a ringlet o'er her brow
Falls like a sunbeam through an April shower;
And, lo! a lovely boy is with her now,
Her only child:—a chief of rival power
Slew her loved lord, and fired his stately tower,
His lands laid waste, his vassals forced to flee,
And unattended in the midnight hour,
Save by the light that made her homeless—she,
With infant in her arms fled to the sanctuary.

And mark that worn, attenuated fair,
Glide like the mist of eve along the vale:

And now she stands, the statue of Despair;
And now a smile lights up her visage pale.
Her knight was brave as ever girded mail,
But fell at last beneath the Turkish brand.
She loves the place of graves when night winds wail,
Raves of a cloven crest, and bloody hand,
And bones all bleached and bare, on desert's burning sand.

And, hark! a clash of arms and trampling steeds,
For know a warlike chieftain comes to-day
To yield the Church his gold, and tell his beads,
So that to-morrow he may burn and slay.
The spell is broke;—behold the swallows play
Through yawning arches; on the mouldering stone
The wildflower hangs; the ivy finds its way
O'er columns fallen, and battlements o'erthrown;
And all is sadly grand, and all is Ruin's own.

The Wandering Piper.

This is of strange phenomena the age,
Of hope-destroying whigs and watchful tories,
Of banded sweeping radicals, that wage
War with both church and state, and which a bore is
From front to rear, they tell us; while from cage
Of royalty, to flutter in the glories
Of petticoats imperial, new made
Peers and knights fly like midges on parade;—

But, 'tis beyond all note and comprehension,
Clubs, dinners, working-men's associations,
Bills of coercion, schemes of church-extension,
Chaps that indulge in pleasing speculations
Of man's perfectibility, suspension
Railways, balls, banquets, duels, agitations,
The church, the charter, and repeal,—it licks ought
Ere madman dreamed—John Bull has turned Don Quixote.

Old Caledonia's rampant for her "Kirk,"
At least, so I've been given to understand,

The subject seems to me a little *mirk;*
In things divine I'm but a sorry hand;
Howe'er I hope she'll never draw her dirk,
Or seek the hills again with book and brand;
And being church-building 'mong a starving people,
Will give each house a bread and butter steeple.

"Man in the moon" is getting something old;
"The wandering Jew" has pitched his tent with Death;
Joanna Southcote, too, has caught a cold
(Poor body) which has ta'en away her breath;
And by the sons of scepticism we're told,
Lost half his terrors even the Devil hath;
And as the world's wild fancy is grown riper,
What has she got now?—ho! "a Wandering Piper!"

Of whom the trump of Fame has sounded loud,
That talismanic touchstone. In all ages
To it the common-sense of man has bowed,
In stamping kings, priests, heroes, saints, and sages,
Who are but pipers all, although allowed
Of higher character in history's pages.
'Tis true, they differ something in their keys,
As also in the mode they manage fees;

Besides, they sometimes with their piping mix
A little of the homicide and juggler;
At other times, again, they play such tricks
As savour of the liar, bandit, smuggler.

It seems the world must yield her tale of bricks
Without straw, still to fascinate or boggle her
Have something, and appears, for ought yet shown,
Just made for kings and clergymen alone.

This man of mystery—but who is he?
Numbers pretend the secret to impart,
Yet know no more than preachers what we'll be,
When fails to flow the fountain of the heart:
Some luminary fallen, he looks to me,
Of gaming-table, or the sporting mart—
A class that Ruin's comet seldom fails to
Treat as the insects cattle with their tails do.

But soft, I think I've heard some people say,
'Tis quite the same whatever the attraction,
Providing you are pleased in your own way,
Or can attain a certain satisfaction;
Life is, even at its longest summer day,
As we all know, a business-like transaction;
But while it lasts, alike are blest to tarry on
The bees their flowers, the beetles on their carrion.

Lines to my Eldest Son.

The Passions reckless of command,
As steed that spurns the desert's sand,
And bounds away in Freedom's bliss,
Proud tenant of the wilderness;
May Heaven forbid that thou should'st own,
With all their pangs that I have known.
The eye to see Truth's happy way,
With heart still prone to turn astray,
And seek perverse, the winding path,
That leads to shame, destruction, death.
Taught, from my earliest hours, to prove
A parent's most indulgent love;
And blest in manhood's dawn a while
With Fortune's fair but treacherous smile;
Then sent upon the world adrift,
Of each, at once of all, bereft;
And doomed to meet the gorgon stare
Of the grim demon of Despair.
But, if proud Passion's wildest wave,
Thy tranquil breast should never lave:

And all my weary wanderings past,
And gained the bed of lasting rest;
While Sabbath's deep bell flings around
Its thought-awaking, solemn sound,
And thou hast left the crowd to pay
One tribute to parental clay;
If, on the path of Time gone by,
My erring steps should meet thine eye,
O, let not then one thought severe
A moment check the rising tear!
The whirlwind, and the zephyr bland,
Fulfil alike the great command.

Epistle to John Stirling, Darval.

The dreary hills in snow were clad;
Cold, dull, and ourie, to his shed
The redbreast, household bird, had fled;
And gloamin' grey
Walked the wide world with silent tread,
To close the day.

Through my dim cabin window, I
Surveyed the vast concave on high,
The cheerless, frowning, winter sky,
And coming night;
While days of youth, long gone, passed by
Before my sight.

O, what is in the hours so sweet,
Loosed from Time's fiery chariot fleet,
And banished to the dark retreat
Of things forgot,
That Fancy loves, yet weeps to meet
Their joys remote.

Whene'er I think on "auld langsyne,"
When days, devoid of care, were mine;
And life's gay morning sun would shine
In cloudless sky;
I linger on the theme divine,
With tearful eye.

But to return; when night displaced
The day, descending down in haste,
And every ray of light had chased
Beyond the girth
That bounds the unfathomable waist
Of mother earth,

I sought the Muse,—I sought in vain;
She turned her back with proud disdain;
And, though repulsed, to seek again
I still returned;
While she as oft my courtship plain
Indignant spurned.

For oft she is, to say the least,
As lazy as a village priest,
When after fuddle or a feast,
On snowy morn,
He hears in bed the bell request
His trusty horn.

When thunders roll—when tempests sweep
The hoary surface of the deep,
And heaven's capacious eyelids weep
Their watery store,
Till down the mountain-torrents leap,
With thundering roar.

Then—then she furious mounts her car,
And joins the elemental war;
Rides the dread blast; and sees afar
The maddening wave
Rise, and the shipwrecked shivering tar,
Imperious crave.

Again she'll wing her wayward flight
To ruined turret's mouldering height;
And, with a frenzied wild delight,
There sit alone,
And hear the doleful birds of night
Tumultuous moan.

Or mark the moon glide slowly through
Her path of deep, dark, cloudless blue;
While suns and systems round pursue
Their courses meet,
And the cold moonlight world in dew
Is slumbering sweet.

And oft on rocks' rude summit grey
She'll stand, as westward wheels the day,
And eye round islet, creek, and bay,
Old Ocean's god
Roll, with a wide, resistless sway,
His purple flood.

To Satire's summit too—you know—
The meddling imp will sometimes go;
And on the folks that walk below,
And pass quite civil,
Her bombs and brickbats down she'll throw,
And play the devil.

But if I give her aught to sing,
She'll instantaneous droop the wing,
And runs perverse her giddy ring,
Which makes me marvel;
But some time yet the freakish thing
May think on Darvel.

Now, fareweel, Johnny; strive to steer
Of priestcraft, debt, and women clear;
And through life's journey may thou bear
A Hampden spirit;
And ne'er rate mankind by their gear,
But by their merit.

Lines to Eliza.

THERE comes an hour, Eliza, when we must
Bid all farewell, and sink into the dust;
There comes a sun, that shall behold us laid
Beneath the turf, forgotten and decayed;
There comes a morning, at whose vernal voice
Earth shall revive, and nature shall rejoice,
But see us sleeping in the dewy sod,
And all unconscious as the kindred clod.
There comes a day, diffusing life and light,
With all that summer gives of warm and bright,
And as away its beams of sunshine pass,
They'll shade us deeper in the long green grass;
There comes a day, when Autumn shall descend,
Dispensing blessings with an open hand;
And o'er these fertile vales youths yet unborn
Shall wield the sickle in the waving corn;
Join in the jests and simple pranks, that goad
The hours along—and lighten labour's load.
And when the dews of evening deck the blade,
And the lone redbreast tops the mellow shade,
In love's embrace they'll hail the twilight scene,
Even in retreats where thou and I have been;

While we, to love and all things else unknown,
Mix our cold dust with generations gone.
There comes a day, whose dull and dreary close
Shall see the world a cheerless waste of snows,
Whose farewell beam and setting crimson streak,
Purpling yon mountain's far-ascending peak,
Shall view the mantle of grim winter spread,
Even o'er the stones that mark our narrow bed;
But these will pass, and ages will roll on,
And we remain unconscious they have flown.
Then comes a day, when dark shall grow the sky,
The sun in mid course, close his dying eye,
The sea stand still, deep-smitten with dismay,
And every isle and mountain flee away;
Then shall our mortal put the immortal on,
And meet ETERNAL JUSTICE on his throne.

The Dog and the Cock,—not a Fable.

WITHIN the shelter of a rising wood,
Fast by a brook, a homely cottage stood;
And well the songsters in the bowers repaid
The crumbs that kindness 'mong the snow had laid.
Beside each window grew a rose-tree tall,
And clumps of daffodil against the wall;
Intruding sunbeams showed the husband's chair,
And puss was dozing comfortably there.

And neighbouring also was a little mill,
Turned by the brawling torrent of the hill;
And down the scanty, rough, rock-skirted road,
The whistling peasant drove the heavy load.

Pausing, I searched the storehouse of the brain,
To find some emblems of the rustic twain;
Whilst musing thus, two heralds of the morn,
With bloody crests, and snowy plumage torn,
I marked at distance, on a verdant height,
Engaged in doubtful, but determined, fight;

But, scarce had time to note the hostile pair,
When a poor sheep-dog, with an anxious air,
Between them rushed, and gently down the hill
His master's drove, until he reached the mill;
Then, with reproof on his sagacious face,
Compelled the culprit to his roosting place.

Who studies well the brutal kind,
In some the qualities will find,
Which he, whatever his estate,
Would oft do well to imitate;
And many more of equal worth,
Kindness and culture would bring forth,
That latent are through life, or die,
Or by neglect, or cruelty.

Carsphairn, May, 1842.

On Seeing a Redbreast Shot.

All ruddy glowed the darkening west,
In azure were the mountains drest,
Her veil of mist had evening cast
O'er all the plain,
And slowly home the reapers passed,
A weary train.

On old Dundonald's hills I lay,
And watched the landscape fade away;
The owl come from the turret grey,
And skim the dell,
While leaves from autumn's sapless spray
Down rustling fell.

While on a thorn, that widely spread
Its moss-grown lowly bending head,
Where long the winter's storm had shed
Its baneful power,
And oft returning summer clad
In leaf and flower;

A redbreast sang of sunshine gone,
And dreary winter coming on;
What though his strains had never known
The rules of art,
They woke to notes of sweetest tone,
The trembling heart.

Bade days return for ever fled,
And hopes long laid among the dead,
And forms in fairy colours clad,
Confused appear;
While melting Feeling kindly shed
Her warmest tear.

When, lo! a flash, a thundering knell,
That startled Echo in her cell,
At once dissolved the pleasing spell,
And hushed the song;
The little warbler lifeless fell
The leaves among.

Thus the young bard, in some retreat
Remote from Learning's lofty seat,
The critic, prowling, haps to meet,
And strikes the blow,
That lays him, with his prospects sweet,
For ever low.

Help's Elegy.

WHAT's this that's happened on the knowe ?
Vexed is ilk heart—fashed ilka pow,
An' down the big saut, saut tears row,
Like laumer bead ;
Lass ! Mary, sabbin', tauld me how
That Help was dead.

Even she, that made the bargain sad
Of bucklin' wi' the rhymster lad,
Wha has, O sirs ! turned out sae bad
In point o' creed,
Forgot it a' when heard she had
That Help was dead !

The auld gudewife cam' to the town,
(And, shame to tell, in tartan gown,)
She brought the news made Bessie tune
Her plaintive reed ;
And aye the chorus o' the soun'
Was, Help is dead !

I heard her brither say of late,
Whene'er he saw the parritch plate,
It brought poor Help's untimely fate
Into his head;
The scartins gang anither gate
Sin' Help is dead.

But what think ye, the sinner wud
The corpse commit unto the flood,
And bid it to the ocean scud,
The fish to feed;
But mair respect the auld folk had
For Help that's dead.

The auld gudeman (sad sight to see)
His grave dug deep beneath a tree,
And laid him in, and cannily
He clapt his head;—
The robins there sing mournfully
O'er Help, that's dead.

Nae mair, when gloamin' cluds the plain,
And wooers come, he'll rack his chain,
And scauld them sair, or mak' a mane
At midnight dread;
The trees sough o'er his dwelling lane—
Puir Help is dead.

He had ae faut—but ane had he;
Which was, when fortune set him free,
He'd steal awa' to court awee
The fleecy breed,
Maist folk and dogs hae twa or three;
Mourn, Help is dead!

Lately, as day began to fail,
I heard a sad and solemn tale,
Sung by twa maidens o'er the pail,
In tartan weed;
And o'er their notes did this prevail,
O, Help is dead!

They sang his coat was bonny brown;
His paws were sleekit, white, and soun';
His voice sae strong, it rang aroun',
Through grove and mead;
The brawest dog e'er death laid down,
Was Help, that's dead.

They sang his toils and troubles past,
The deeds that spoke his wisdom vast,
And gied their claes, while tears fell fast,
The tither screed;
Then raise, deep, wild, as winter's blast,
An' Help is dead!

But, O, dear sirs! what's this that's wrang?
I fin' my Muse has lost the fang—
She says, nae farther wi' her sang
She can proceed,
But bids you keep in memory lang
Puir Help, that's dead.

Arran, from the Sea.

As quits some soul her tenement of clay,
Behind yon hills retires the orb of day;
Yon gloomy hills, in awful grandeur piled,
Which mock the storm that revels o'er the wild;
Yon hills, that burst from earth's eternal hold,
When dire convulsions shook the world of old.
Wake, Contemplation! 'tis thy favoured hour:
The time to prove thy salutary power;
The huge grey cliffs suspended insecure—
The peaceful dwellings of the mountain boor—
The deep, dark vales—the torrent's rugged way—
The forests tall that skirt the winding bay—

Rise on the sight, and captivate the eye;
Woods, rocks, hills, streams, in grand confusion lie;
How great the power, how potent the decree,
That formed the whole with only—"LET THERE BE!"

To Robert Chambers, Esq.,

On Reading His History of the Rebellion of 1745.

Star of the North! old Scotia lifts her eye,
With rapture blazing, to behold thy light;
While from its beams the mists of ages fly,
Oblivion's captives come from shades of night.
They come—they pass along in order bright,
And ravished nations stand in deep amaze;
Thy fame is echoed from each mountain height;
The thistle waves its head, and honour pays,
And Fame prepares a crown of everlasting bays.

Dwells there a man in Albion's empire vast
For whom thy powerful pages have no charms?
He stands unworthy of that land confessed,
The ancient nurse of freedom and of arms.
Where is the breast that throbs not with alarms,
Whilst thou unfold'st the battle's dreadful shock,
Where mountain-valour to a frenzy warms,
Wild as the whirlwind from the deep unbroke,
That flings the surge on high, till shakes the solid rock?

No part is left of Learning's hallowed ground;
Yea, what she deemed a desert and a waste
Thou hast explored, and flowers unnumbered found,
That her fair garland have adorned and graced,
They who our history's varied scene have traced,
All light—all shade—as gold or party swayed,
May hide their heads, their laurels all defaced;
But thy wreath only with the sun shall fade,
Bloom to the end of time, and flourish undecayed.

Fragment.

THERE's something awful in the midnight hour,
When, starting sudden from a transient sleep,
We see the moonbeams in a silvery shower
Fall on our chamber floor, and dark, and deep
The shadows of the distant mountains lower,
And hear the moaning night wind's sullen sweep,
And see the trees around like spectres stand,
And this when far away from friends and father-land.

Then seem the forms that gladdened life's young day
Around our couch to come with smiles of love,
And eyes all eloquent, albeit that they
Have long, long ceased 'mong living things to move.
But stern Remembrance wings her envious way
Through Reason's circuit, and, like Noah's dove,
Returns unwelcome tidings to declare,
That these are dreams of Fancy, false as they are fair.

Kircudbright, March, 1842.

Epistle to Mrs. Hamilton, of Park Hill.

MADAM,—I have received your note,
Besides my scroll of ragged coat;
And, 'tis enough for all I've wrote,
To know that one
Enlightened mind has pleasure got
From aught I've done.

If e'er in print I try my gear,
Among the very first ye'll hear;
And for the part, I learn, ye'll bear
At that sad crisis,
I send to you my thanks sincere,
And warmest wishes.

But, as the Ephesian town-clerk said,
"Let us do nothing rash," for aid
Old Time shall bring; and Fate has played
A trick as queer,
As call me from confinement's shade
And dungeons drear.

Perhaps my lot she yet may lay
Beneath the glorious blaze of day,
Where wood, and vale, and mountain grey,
Are spread around;
And rocks that roll the deep away
With voice profound.

Then far as Nature's wide expanse
Exceeds a workshop's stinted glance;
And far as Nature's notes advance
Above the din
That wounds and stupifies the sense,
Our cells within:

As far my song shall then transcend,
That which now labours through my hand;
Converse with Nature will extend
My strength and skill,
And point the steps by which t' ascend
The sacred hill.

Meantime, in life's dark rugged road,
Obscure, unknown, I grave-ward plod,
Cheered on beneath the present load
By Hope's faint light,
Which often has deceitful glowed,
To set in night.

Hark! hark! I hear the critic corps
Behind, with rude invidious roar;
And, lo! oblivion's gulf, before,
Is yawning wide;
The Bard's launched in—nor rises more
Above the tide.

But, hold! my wild imagination!
I see, Ma'am, you've got information
That I, since at your habitation,
To Hymen's altar
Have paid the usual visitation,
And got his halter!

Yes! lang Jock danced about the light,
Rejoicing in its radiance bright,
With frolicsome, incautious flight,
Nor feared the gin,
Till, like some insect of the night,
He tumbled in.

Mony a weary mile he trottit,
O'er mony a stane and hillock stottit,
Or wet to skin, wi' dirt bespottit,
Or laired in snaw;
The vera next night he forgot it,
And scoured awa.

But aft he viewed, with rapture high,
The silent, starry, moonlight sky,
And earth asleep beneath it lie;
While on the gale
Arose the river's mighty sigh,
Far down the dale.

And aft the owlet, wandering hame
Through the still morn, cried out—"Fie shame!"
The very collies did exclaim!
And even the craik
Would rant, till rocks returned the same,
"Ye rake! ye rake!"

But now the chiel maun toil and sweat,
'Neath scorching sun, or tempest's beat,
Nor e'er approach the muse's seat,
For 's very nose;
Or get a curtain lecture by 't,
And lumpless brose.

But hush, my harp. May peace be still
Within the mansion of Parkhill;
May ye your course with joy fulfil,
And then arise,
Triumphant o'er this world of ill,
Beyond the skies.

This leaves us both, and our relations,
In health, and at our occupations;
And while my heart-strings their vibrations
And tone maintain,
Your much obliged, through all mutations,
Ma'am, I remain.

On Visiting the Grave of Hardie and Baird, in Stirling Churchyard.

Away ye streams that wind in sullen pride,
Or dash impetuous down the mountain's side;
Ye fragrant groves that shade the rifted steep,
And wave your tops like dimples of the deep;
Ye glittering villas, whence the noonday light
Returns in beams insufferably bright;
Ye ramparts rude that on the cliffs have hung,
When yon far hills, and even time was young;
Yon far, far hills that skirt the welkin round,
Where slumber morning's lazy mists profound;

Where Freedom had of old her sacred home,
And bade defiance to the hosts of Rome;
Whate'er can yield the glowing heart delight,
Or burst in glory on the ravished sight.
Away! away, and let Destruction fling
Her bolts of vengeance from the whirlwind's wing;
The heavens be dark as demon of Despair,
And deeply furrowed by the lightning's glare;
Ye giant thunders in your strength awake,
Till earth astonished to her centre shake;
And let the spirits from the realms of light,
That stood of old for Caledonia's right,
Descend indignant, and, in name of heaven,
Ask, where's the boon their victories have given?
My soul should have a scene congenial then,
To weep—to ponder o'er these murdered men.

The Formalist.

"A steady, sturdy, stanch believer."
BURNS.

FORTH comes the man, for, lo! 'tis Sabbath morn;
To church he goes,—but by what motive borne?
Amid the vast and variegated throng,
Robed in his best, he thoughtless steps along;
Whose cut and colour to the curious show
The reigning fashion—thirty years ago.
Pale is his face, the prominences bold,
And badly formed, to stand the piercing cold;
Blank and unmeaning, to the world displayed,
In all the pomp of vacancy arrayed.

The church is gained—the text is read—he winks,
Nods, till in Morpheus' loving arms he sinks;
Or with a stupid, rude, and wandering gaze,
The place, the preacher, and the crowd surveys.
When sermon's o'er, elate he homeward hies,
As much improved, as penitent, as wise

As when he came; nor sentence can he tell
More than he could at ringing of the bell.
"Fine man! fine man! sound doctrine!" he will say,
As great achievement, mark the text he may.
And though he own the creed and Christian name,
'Tis but because his fathers did the same;
And had his lot been cast in eastern clime,
Where Ganges pours his sacred tide sublime,
To that dread deity had learned to kneel,
Or dragged the idol's murdering chariot wheel.
Mere child of form! yet steadily inclined
To that which dawned upon his youthful mind;
Sordid of soul, of spirit mean and poor,
To pride or power a stepping-stone secure.
O, how unlike of old the warrior wight,
Who pricked his thundering charger to the fight,
Whirled the bright brand, and dealt the deadly blow,
That told like lightning on the blasted foe;
And bade the waters of the mountain flood,
Sweep to the vale the fierce invader's blood.

My fancy soars,—I see his stately form,
Firm as the oak that mocks the winter's storm;
Fire in his eye, and valour in his arm,
A soul alive to freedom's every charm:
Mark, with a free-born air he bears his head,
The mist-clad mountain sounding to his tread.
Such were thy sons, dear Caledonia! thine
The guards of Freedom at her lofty shrine

In ancient days, for life nor death would yield
One foot of Right's invaluable field;
But fled upon the wings of Time, again
We seek for such, but seek the land in vain.

Written at "The Bonny Bush Aboon Traquair."

STERN winter's voice is on the hill,
And summer's glory swells the wave
Of troubled Tweed, and loud, and chill,
The gusts through "birks" of Yarrow rave,
Her "braes" in mourning weeds are clad,
For children of the sunshine,—dead.

Aweary, pensive, and alone,
Like tree upon the trackless waste;
Or storm-beat solitary stone,
That points to where the mighty rest—

I stand beneath thy branches bare,
Thou "bonny bush aboon Traquair."

Song-sainted relic of the past,
  How many hearths have heard thy name;
How many hearts whose lots were cast
  In foreign lands, with holy flame
Have burned, while rose their native air,
The "bonny bush aboon Traquair."

Years come like e'ening on the dell,
  And gone are Yarrow's bards of yore;
And Tweed, and Ettrick weeping tell,
  That Scott and Hogg are now no more.
And something says, again, I ne'er
Shall see the "bush aboon Traquair."

Traquair, November, 1840.

Epistle to Mr. Robert Brown, Kirkhill, Craigie.

How get ye on, my auld fier "Kirkie?"
Wee, gleg, auld-farrant, cockin', birkie,
Is Fortune's sky grown dim and murky;
Or dazzling bright,
Like sunset on the shores of Turkey,
A sea of light?

Does e'er the muse now come to see you,
And climb the hill of Barnweil wi' you,
And there sic lifts, sic visions gi' you,
That things of Time
And sense for ever seem to lea' you,
In thoughts sublime?

Or has she on you turned her back,
And doomed you to a catch-the-plack,
To tread the sordid gin-horse track
Down to the grave;
When o'er your head Oblivion black
Shall roll her wave?

But, "Kirkie," auld eneugh's your horn,
To ken the muses saw nae corn,
Nor spin a thread that can be worn
To face the cauld,
And lea' their votaries aft forlorn,
When frail and auld.

Na', for sic things they never care,
But croon and canter here and there,
Nor teach for a' their heathenish lear,
A bairn its carritch,
Nor e'er o' saut ae spoonfu' spare
To mak' the parritch.

Nae wonder, then, ere life's short day
Has measured half its joyless way,
Bards o'er some precipice should gae,
Wi' a' their bays,
And furnish mony a tale of wae
To after days.

Should e'er I see Apollo's face,
I'll tell 'im, if he disna place
His household gear in tense and case,
He's nae grammarian,
Why lag behind this railroad race,
Utilitarian.

He must get hands, nor frail, nor few,
To spin, weave, cook, distil, and brew,
And mony a snob, and hosier too,
And tailor wight;
Besides, a mint the hale year through,
Gaun day and night.

Nae mair the bardies then should thole,
Reproach and want frae pole to pole,
Sklent leuks, and tongue's contemptuous roll,
Frae gets of Folly,
Wha ne'er were blessed wi' half the soul
Of shepherd's colly.

Ho', steersman Reason,—look afore,
I hear the breaker's hungry roar,
Yet on we scud, as Wilson's corps,
Of beagles speed,
Harlin' their red-het harrows o'er
Some wretch's head.

Then (I suppose) we'll shorten sail,
Talk wiser, though perhaps more stale,
Spier gin ye're aye at meal-time hale,
And douce, and steady,
Or joined hae to your title's tail
The term—grand-daddy.

But, if the Fates so kind should be,
Or causes and effects agree,
Or means and ends each other see,
On fittin' friendly,
Or what else name divinity
Shall deem mair kindly

To gie' the jilts, howe'er should they
Gang linkin' down the wished for way,
My wandering bardship hopes to hae
The pleasure soon,
Your hand to shake some market day
In Killie toun.

Meanwhile, 'tis mine to trace a land,
Where wide tracks scorn the tiller's hand;
Yet, in my heart's hall Rapture's brand
Will kindle bright,
At e'ening's fall 's I take my stand
On some lone height.

And see afar the moorland waste,
The tarn, the mountain russet-drest,
The forest groaning in the blast,
The seafowls soar,
The whelming wave, with snowy crest,
Assault the shore.

But hark, one—two, guid morn my frien',
May ne'er ye see what I have seen,
Grim Ruin face to face, and keen
Detraction's blade,
Drawn first by those that should have been
The first to shade.

Domestic * * * * fly,
Hope fled, nae frien' beneath the sky,
The arm unstrung, the dark'ning eye
And half seared brain,
And even the desperate wish to die,
But wished in vain.

Eneugh—and mair, be sure that ye
To Mrs. Brown remember me;
And to the lyric Elder, he
"Of Barnweil brae,"
So guid society that see
For ance I may.

Wigtown, January 8, 1842.

Lines Written near Kilmarnock House.

You aged beech, all crimsoned with the ray
Of weary light that forms the winter day,
Calls to remembrance, with a pleasing pain,
The days I never shall behold again;
And joys that seem by memory displayed,
To veil the present with a denser shade.
While Nature stands in a dejected state
And on the sun eve shuts the western gate,
I'll pause alone! and sadly drop a tear
O'er what is now, and what has once been here.

Within that ancient but neglected place,
When life was sweet, there dwelt another race;
But all has long since passed the silent shore
Of the dark ocean of the world no more;
No trace is left, no vestige can be found,
Nor of themselves, nor household gods around.
'Tis but in Fancy's shadowy dream appears
The watch-dog, terror of my younger years;
The hoary hind, that travelled daily all
These mansions round, at duty's various call;
The well-remembered cattle, that would wait,
And *low*, impatient for the opening gate;

The roofless houses, where I climbed in quest
Of the small treasures of the songster's nest;
The garden, sleeping in the morning dew,
With its rich fruits, and flowers of every hue;
And charms, which vainly words attempt to trace,
That hung in storm and sunshine round the place;
All that once awed or made my young heart gay,
Change has removed, and Time has swept away.

Written at the Grave of Robin Hood.

How seemly sleeps the forest king
  Beneath the greenwood's spreading bough,
Where round the merry minstrels sing,
  And fresh and free the breezes blow;
And dark yews shade, with sombre grace,
The noble hunter's resting place.

Long sacred may thine ashes be,
England's first archer, bold, and free;
Thy times were dark, but yet the fire
Imparted by our common Sire,
Burned brightly in thy manly breast,
Despite the tyrant's stern behest;
The churchman's wile, the despot's chain,
For thee were forged alike in vain;
Blythe dancing 'neath the greenwood tree,
Thy partner, glorious Liberty!

When sceptered wretches are no more,
When priestcraft's iron age is o'er,
When conquerors have found their right
Legitimate, the land of night;
When marts where life's resistless wave
Now swells, are voiceless as the grave,
And forests rise where cities stood,
In song shall live "bold Robin Hood."

Kirklees, Yorkshire, Sept., 1843.

The Bard.

Away in rich, red, mournful light,
The short-lived winter day had gone;
The dusky twilight closed around,
And sullen night came quickly on.
By Irvine's banks of faded green
I roamed, with easy reckless tread,
Pondering on joys of earlier days,
—Alas! for ever—ever fled.

When, lo! beneath a willow grey,
That seemed to wail Time's ruthless hand,
All melancholy o'er his harp
I marked a youthful minstrel stand.
The bloom was faded on his cheek;
His eye, expressive, deep, and slow,
Was turned with strange reflecting gaze
Upon the swelling stream below.

He raised his harp—a harp which ne'er
Had art to polish fondly striven,

Save where with withered hare-bells hung,
'Twas all as first from nature given;
He eyed it with an absent look,
Along the chords his fingers ran,
Then placed it on the ground, with tears,
And thus his doleful tale began:—

"Ye naked forests, sad to see,
"Where drowsy birds no shelter find;
"Ye barren, bleak, bleak mountain tops,
"Long beaten by the winter wind;
"Ye fields, no more in verdure drest;
"Ye valleys, all in ruins laid;
"Thou red swollen river, raging on,
"That once in whirls so sweetly played;

"Ye stars! that through the gloom of night
"Emit a faint and glimmering ray,
"That oft with transport I have seen
"Along the unclouded welkin stray;
"Parts of great Nature's awful frame,
"Hear ye an artless bard complain,
"And tell her, in her leafless bower,
"The burden of my humble strain.

"Say, why has she into my breast
"Infused that wayward restless fire,
"Which leads to follow Fancy vain,
"And labour o'er the luckless lyre!

"And why do Fate's black surging waves,
"To quench that flame for ever rise?
"Why am I doomed a path to seek,
"Which Fate has barred—which Fate denies?

"And why do Nature's simplest scenes
"Bid Feeling's subtile ocean swell,
"Till raptures kindle in my soul,
"Unfit were angel's tongue to tell?
"And yet to noisome cell confined,
"I gain by fits a transient taste,
"Which serves, like dying sunbeam bright,
"That shows the sky with storms defaced.

"O! had some humble shed been mine,
"Where high hills rear the lofty head,
"Where sunless stream-blessed glens retreat—
"And Nature's boundless forests spread;
"Then had I joyous met the dawn,
"The dewdrops glancing on the thorn,
"And, wandering o'er the wild flowers sweet,
"Have heard the hermit cushat mourn.

"Or, had it been my lot to range
"The mighty ocean's empire wide,
"And twine in song its wonders great,
"Far dancing o'er the bounding tide;
"The lands where seraph bards have sung,
"Where first the flowers of Science blew,

"The sad remains of grandeur gone,
"Through rapture's rising tear to view.

"Or, had even Learning lent her aid,
"Disclosed her treasures to the eye,
"To bid the soul her powers expand,
"And Fancy wing her flight on high;
"Though in the city's deepest shades
"Had my few short, short days been spent,
"And joined to poverty for life,
"I had been blessed with sweet content.

"But, 'tis not so! the morning comes
"And brings no joy; and, as the day
"Wheels her swift course, my life she sees
"In lonely langour wear away;
"As is the wanderer of the wave,
"When cast upon the thirsty sand;
"As is the lark, in durance placed
"By some relentless, cruel hand.

"But why unmanly thus complain?
"Come, Resolution! arm my soul!
"'Tis heaven ordains! fret not, while joy
"Pervades creation as a whole.
"But a few days, or years at most,
"Till the unchained immortal mind
"Shall mount to its eternal source,
"And leave earth's sordid dust behind."

He ceased—he vanished through the night!
But echo long, with silver tongue,
From rock, and vale, and hollow cave,
Hymned o'er the notes he last had sung.
Yet oft when darkness shades the world
With Contemplation's sober stride,
While wandering there, methinks I hear
His notes along the waters glide.

On being Asked what Figure was most Descriptive of a Poet.

When long, long shadows of the midnight fall
From the rent towers of yonder ruined wall,
And the bright sentinels of heaven are seen
Each in his post around their peerless queen;
The winds are pillowed on the mountain's breast,
And woods and waters are in waveless rest;
Hast thou not seen the meteor on its way
Diffusing round a secondary day,
But scarce upon the eye its beams had shone,
When the fair phantom was for ever gone.

Midnight Thoughts.

The wind howls eerie in yon darksome wood,
The rain descends in torrents on the wold,
And through the vast unbounded solitude
Far, far away the thunderbolt is rolled!
Both in one cell of Death's obdurate hold
Moulder the forms from whom I drew my birth,—
Could we the grave's dread covering unfold,
How changed are they since round the blazing hearth
In industry engaged, or in the hour of mirth.

And 'tis but as a dream that they have been,
Remembrance wonders if the tale be true;
They were, and passed away like sunbeams sheen,
Pursued by evening o'er the mountains blue:
Around me spring a race that soon shall view,
Through the dim shadows of departed Time,
My fleet existence; while, beneath the dew,
The sunshine of the skies, the storm sublime,
Shall, soon forgotten, sleep the wayward son of rhyme.

Eternity! Eternity! O what
Strange scenes wilt thou unto my soul disclose!

The parting pang—O! how encounter that,
How meet the Fount whence being first arose?
Back with a start our shuddering nature goes,
As from a precipice the steps of fear;
Why should we dread the gift that heaven bestows?
Ignobly wish to wander strangers here,
All things through Nature point to man some higher sphere.

Written in Melrose Abbey.

Bright as the beams of everlasting day,
On sapphire palaces of heaven that play;
Or tide eternal of effulgence rolled,
On crystal battlements and streets of gold;
And gem-built cities of celestial dyes,
But to be looked on by immortal eyes;
Unnumbered images at once appear,
Yet find no breath, no language, but a tear.

October, 1840.

Hannah Hedgehog.

If such had but the power to kill
And torture, as they have the will,
The deeds our history's page that stain,
Would all be acted o'er again.

HERE Hannah Hedgehog's ta'en the screen
O' Death's bit narrow biggin'—
Her tongue out through had worn clean
Her mouth's substantial riggin'.

And of Tartarean bellows made
Though were her lungs, yet they
At length in shreds and tatters gaed
Wi' everlasting play;

For faith she had a task severe,
To blacken and defame,
Ilk ane she kent, or e'en could hear
An inklin' o' their name.

And mark and mention every ane
Upon whose lot was poured,

For his or predecessor's sin,
  The judgments of the Lord.

Twa facts she constantly could see,
  As clear as noonday light,
To wit, her neighbour aye aglee,
  Hersel' for ever right.

Wha squared not wi' her "question beuk,"
  Was "in a sad condition;"
And, oh! wi' what complacent leuk
  She sent them to perdition.

Wi' Bible like a kitchen hearth
  She weekly took her place
In meeting-house, nor kent the dearth
  O' sighin' and grimace;

But parish kirk—ere she'd gaen there
  She'd of her head been shorn;
For know she was that jewel rare—
  An Antiburgher born!

And weel she kent, and aft she'd say,
  That a' the true elect
Were just hersel and twa three mae,
  That formed her favoured sect;

And a' the human race beside
  Were given to seduction
O' Satan, that God glorified
  Might be in their destruction!

And this, she said, was "tidings glad,"
  A message from above
O' mercy, from that Being shed,
  That goodness is and love!

The needy wretch that oped her door
  Was glad to get away,
Her answer was like lion's roar,
  Or voice of Biscay's bay.

But when the Synod sought her aid,
  Or Pastor gaed the hint,
The moolie pennies, wi' parade,
  She'd shower like ony mint.

Yet some wild wag declares, that should
  She find the heavenly road,
Satan, we safely may conclude,
  Sits on the throne of God!

Written on Reading an Account of the Ruins of Palmyra.

Death and Destruction! O, what have ye done?
What feats achieved? what conquests have ye won?
Towers, cities, empires, palaces decay,
Confess your power, and own your iron sway.
Where are the sage and mighty men of old,
That warred with nations, and the world controlled?
Where are the hosts that laboured to destroy
The sons and city of imperial Troy?
The seats where Commerce held her ancient reign,
And poured her treasures over land and main?
The piles were Fame had put her firmest trust?
What is your answer? "*Silent in the dust!*"

Lines on Visiting my Uncle's Grave.

'Tis sweet to mark beneath the moon
  The arms of yonder ancient tree;
Though o'er my soul it sadness flings,
  And bids the big tear fill my e'e.

But sweeter, sadder, 'tis to muse
  By yonder castle's ruined wa';
That says a thousand things, that hae
An echo in my bosom a'.

But sweeter still to linger where
  The withered wild flowers sadly wave;
And sweep the winds with hollow moan,
  The turf of yonder new-made grave.

Like yonder tree, I'm left alane,
  Like yonder tower, I'm Ruin's prey,
Like yonder grave, I'm green without,
  But all within is dead for aye.

A Fragment.

When Spring to earth has paid her grateful vow,
And hung her chaplet on the mountain's brow,
'Tis sweet to mark the opening bud, the stream
Dissolved, run glittering in the noontide beam,
To list the wintry silence of the grove,
Broke by the notes of melody and love.

'Tis sweet in drowsy summer morn to rest
Far from the world on some wild mountain's breast,
On whose primeval turf of mossy green
The daisy beckons to the breeze serene;
And little violet of heaven's own blue,
That seems like worth to shun the vulgar view;
The blooming furze, the birch, and yellow broom,
On either side diffuse a rich perfume;
Like honours upon age, the eglantine,
And mountain rose, in graceful wreaths entwine,—
The moss-grown branches of the patriarch thorn,—
All twinkling beauteous with the tears of morn;
And clumps of fern, and clustering foxglove grace
The ancient cairn, the warrior's resting place.

There stretched at ease, the subject plain survey,
Its rural charms and city far away;
Where the dust rests of those that once could claim
Of all on earth, our kindest, softest name.
The graves that now the only home appear,
That stern adversity has left us here;
Where the last heart that loved us low is laid,
The dear, dear hands our tottering steps that stayed,
The lips that often kissed us while we slept,
The eyes that watch o'er all our troubles kept,
Saw, through affection's tears, our early ways,
The tongue that taught us first our Maker's praise.

And, O! how sweet, when in her heavenly vest
Of stainless snow, is slumbering Nature drest!
And all is hushed at twilight's solemn hour,
High on the turrets of some mouldering tower,
To mark the red round sun of winter sink
Far on the Ocean's melancholy brink,
There to indulge in meditation deep,
Till raptured Feeling bids us fondly weep.

Written beside Auchinleck House.

Here stay, my wandering steps—a moment trace
The fairy grandeur of this sylvan scene;
Here Nature's awful charms awhile embrace,
Till tears of rapture seek the faded green:
Beneath this stately tree, that sear and sheen,
Already flings its honours on the gale;
And more unfolds to pensive minds, I ween,
Than ever yet was done by mortal tale;
How meagre oft are words when feelings high prevail.

And here, in days not dimly seen remote,
Had Learning's sons their consecrated bower;
Beloved, revered, by men of Science sought,
Of other lands the precedence and flower.
And here the muse hath sung in later hour,
Songs that shall spread through far futurity,
On the fond heart shall still exert their power,
While Albion's hills o'erlook the guardian sea,
And her proud warlike sons are, as its surges, free.

But these, with Time, alas! have passed away,
And all is sad for them, or seems to be;

The cushat's wail, the redbreast's melting lay,
The forest's wave, the stream's mild lullaby,
Have all drunk deeply; but, lo! who is she?
So fair to sight, with triumph in her eye—
'Tis Fame—she speaks in all her majesty;
And thus, as Nature checks the deep-drawn sigh,
"Though vanished are their hours, their names can never die!"

October, 1839.

On Visiting the Lake of Windermere.

When Sabbath's holy calm was breathing round,
And every spot seemed consecrated ground;
And the young thoughts were robed in colours bright,
Fresh from the Fountain of all life and light,
I've laid my head upon my mother's knee,
And, wondering, listened eagerly, while she
Discoursed of that far world, beyond the sway
Of the dire ills that vex life's fleeting day;

While infant fancy dazzling pictures drew,
For ever beautiful, and ever new;
And oft, when dreaming of that land of bliss,
Methinks I've imaged such a scene as this.

Bowness, August, 1843.

A Summer Evening.

Beyond the abyss, that leads its hoary files
Of warrior waves round Albion's many isles,
The day went down, and evening o'er the dale
Shed her soft tears, and spread her silver veil;
The noisy village, by the sheltering hill,
Was hushed to rest, and all was sweetly still,
Save where the mavis, in the darkening brake,
An anthem warbled for his partner's sake;
Or rustling pinions and discordant sound
Of watchful lapwing wavering around;
Or faint far off the river's rapid sweep,
Fast journeying on to join the mighty deep;

The dark blue mountains to the west were seen,
And seemed as penciled on the sky serene;
Around whose tops were hung in bright array
The robes that decked the orb of parting day;
All had conspired to fill the pensive breast
With things too great, too sweet to be expressed.

Written at my Father's Grave.

Descending suns, or seasons on the wane,
The silent city, the deserted fane,
The forest's fallen monarch, or the mouldering tower,
Hold o'er the heart unutterable power;
But faint the effect, and feeble is the sway,
To what we feel beside the unconscious clay
Of those with whom we've run the race of life,
Shared in its joys, or struggled in its strife;
Now gone for ever from this world of care,
For ever gone—alas! we know not where.
But higher far arise our feelings must,
When pondering o'er a loving parent's dust.
Sustain awhile frail nature—O, my God!
Else bursts my heart, I sink beneath the rod.

A Winter's Evening.

LIKE dying saint's was seen the sun's last smile,
O'er the blue waves that roll around our isle;
I wandered forth; keen swept the rising breeze
O'er the bare fields, and through the leafless trees;
The distant hills, in desolation's dress,
Told to the plains a tale of deep distress;
And oft between the blasts were heard afar
The mingling sounds of elemental war.
As on I passed, day gently sunk to rest
Far in the lowering chambers of the west;
No warbling songster gave a kind adieu,
As round the dreary shades of evening drew;
But sadness settled in her gloomy reign
O'er the dark deep and o'er the barren plain;
The twilight failed; and waxing in her might,
Fell on the fields the joyless winter night.

A Fragment.

When flowers, dew-burden'd, hang the weary head,
And morning's mists are on the mountains spread;
When smoky pillars, curl on curl, arise
From cottage chimneys, towering to the skies;
When rooks slow journeying through the morning air,
To fields afar in sable crowds repair;
And through the silent morn, far, far away,
Harsh clattering wheels the heavy loads betray;
Then let me linger where I've plucked the flower,
Or chased the bee in childhood's sunny hour;
Recount its pleasures past, its joys decayed,
And mourn the change that ruthless time has made.

Written in Dumfries Churchyard.

Oblivion! all unconquerable power,
Vain our attempts to shun thy dreaded hour;
The time must come, when e'en the earth we tread
Shall form a part unknown in ocean's bed.

Written under the Impression of Melancholy.

As rolls the sun his deep red setting beams
On some dark mountain, till on fire it seems;
So backward shine the dear departed rays
Of childhood gone, on these dim evil days;
Still, as through life's lone journey I proceed,
Cares crowd on cares, and toils to toils succeed;
But mourn not, muse, nor shudder at the gloom,
Soon we shall rest within the silent tomb.

Written on a View of Cairntable.

Like yon high hill my bypast life has been—
Wide tracks of shade, and sunny spots between;
And, like yon hill's far stretching solitude,
Alas! but barren of all real good;
Life's noon is wasted, and age comes amain,
Like night on traveller of the desert plain.
Oh! grant kind heaven, that I may undismayed
Approach death's deep, impenetrable shade.

Muirkirk, May, 1840.

Epitaph for Mr. John Ingram, R.A.

BENEATH this strange turf, where the long ragweeds tremble,
And ghosts of the churchyard all nightly assemble,
Lie, for ever relieved from each earthly tenter,
The canvass and frame of John Ingram, the painter;
But the lights and the shades that composed the design
Have long since returned to their Fountain Divine;
By degrees they withdrew, and when Death did attend
To blot out the picture—'twas done to his hand.

Written on Seeing a Carpet Factory Subscription Ball.

OLD Plato once met Father Jove,
And asked the Self-Existent,
"What was in earth or heaven above
"Of all most inconsistent?"
Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
To Heaven's high towers advancing,
Unveiled this world,—"Now" says the god,
"D'ye see yon weavers dancing?"

Epitaph for Mr. T. Gunn.

An engine this was that much service did once,
  Beneath the black banner of King Defamation,
Jack Malice was gunner, its site was the sconce
  Of Envy, and played upon fort Reputation.

At length the commander-in-chief, Monsieur Fate,
  An order dispatched by his aidecamp, Time,
To old Serjeant Death, who acting in straight
  Accordance with that in the mandate sublime,

Dismounted and spiked the said engine, and lent
  The wreck to Sir Grave, till earth's last troops appear,
When recast it shall be by the Maker, and sent
  To the arsenal grand of the first Cannonier.*

* *Vide* Milton.

To a Person with very large Feet.

When Paton came to heaven's gate,
Saint Peter looked quite saucy,
And cried, "Stand back—your feet's so great
"Ye'll crack our crystal causeway."

M'Adam passing on survey,
Said, "Pate, my lad, ye're wrang;
"Braid wheels but half the duty pay
"Where'er they chance to gang."

On some Ill-bred Agricultural Apprentices.

Whate'er his pupils Brown has taught
Of ploughing, sowing, feeding;
'Tis plain, some little hints he ought
To give them yet, on—Breeding!

But, O! may gracious Heaven his skill
From such a task exempt aye,
Namely, attempting *that* to fill
Which Nature has made—Empty.

Written on a Nobleman's Gate,

BENEATH AN INTIMATION THAT VISITORS ON FOOT WERE ADMITTED ONLY ON WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS.

To vilest sinner of our race
  Still open lies the path of heaven;
What! is this some superior place,
  But entrance twice a-week is given?

On Mr. J. Inch complaining of the small Size of my Volume.

My book, the thirst of such a man,
  For quantity might quench;
I'm sure it is at least a span,
  And thou art but an *Inch*.

On seeing some severe Criticisms on my first Edition by a Mr. Patrick Knox.

BOTH friends and foes *Pat.* gives a thwack,
And *Knox* are bruisers everywhere;
No wonder my poor lines are black
And blue, on facing such a pair!

On hearing that Mr. Lamb had Bereived Mr. Shepherd.

SOME say a Lamb is harmless, yet
I have an instance known
Of one that has a *Shepherd* bit,
Aye, bit unto the bone!

Epitaph for J. W., Dyer.

HERE rests of Johnny White the clay,
Who long had *dyed* for pelf;
But at command of Fate one day,
He, *gratis, died* himself!

Epitaph for C**rl*s L*tk***t.

UNDER this lightning-blasted sod,
Falsehood, Deceit, and Malice lie;
Behold, ye saints, and bless your God,
Millenium times are surely nigh!

The Happy Five.

SONG, WRITTEN FOR FIVE BACHELORS, TO BE SUNG IN A FULL MEETING.

AIR—"Joseph Tuck, the tailor's son."

Now, since we're met, let's merry get,
And bid the song arise, Sir;
And for a while our cares beguile,
For swift the moment flies, Sir.
Nae wives we dread, our shins to bleed,
Our hair to rug and rive, Sir;
Old Hymen's switch shall never touch
The free, the happy five, Sir.
Chorus—Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Though fair anes sly the fishing try,
  And shining bait prepare, Sir,
We'll lift the hook, and only look
  To see what's lurking there, Sir;
To see what can puir simple man
  Of happiness deprive, Sir,
But keep aloof, for arrow proof
  Are all the happy five, Sir.
    Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Auld Adie crouse took up his house,
  And Madam square began, Sir;
But soon the jilt his pleasure spilt,
  And ruined the honest man, Sir.
And, since his day, nae man, they say,
  Can e'er in wedlock thrive, Sir;
But never shall her chains enthral
  The free, the happy five, Sir.
    Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When Summer sweet, wi' flowery feet,
  Comes whiddin' o'er the braes, Sir,
To cleed the wood, and deck the sod,
  And langer spin the days, Sir;
While married fools tug at the tools,
  And toil till scarce alive, Sir,
As unconfined as mountain wind
  Shall rove the happy five, Sir.
    Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When Winter hoar, frae shore to shore,
  Spreads out the biting snaw, Sir,
The married men, sae blue and thin,
  Can scarce come out ava, Sir;
Alang the ice, wi' caution nice,
  The channel stane we'll drive, Sir,
And nightly sing, till echoes ring,
  The sporting merry five, Sir.
    Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Now let them blow, and make a show,
  About the married life, Sir,
'Tis at the best, if right confessed,
  But drudgery and strife, Sir;
Let those who may become a prey,
  And right to ruin drive, Sir,
We'll sport about, and wag it out,
  The free, the happy five, Sir.
    Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Sandy that Wons in the Aird.

AIR—"Logie o' Buchan."

O! WAS ye whare Irwine rows roun the stey brae,
Whare the gowd gowan glints 'neath the snaw-blossomed
slae?
And lo'ed by ilk bodie frae duke to the caird,
Say, met ye wi' Sandy, that wons in the Aird?

He's nae cantin' loon wi' a bass-fiddle face,
Aye talkin' o' sin, condemnation, an' grace;
But he's what is far better, an' wanr can be spared,
He's an honest man, Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

Where a prank's to be played, or a cuff gi'en to care,
Or some doughty deed dune, he is sure to be there;
Yet his rigs are weel tilled, an' fu' bein' his stackyard,
Sic a fell chiel is Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

When the wee drap gi'es life to the laugh an' the joke,
He's whiles in a corner enjoyin' his "smoke;"
But mark, when his weapon o' satire is bared,
Few care to meet Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

O! wha owre the lea like the swallow has passed?
Or drift when 'tis driven by December's bauld blast?
Was e'er horse and rider sae happily paired?
"Creepin' Kate" an' blythe Sandy that wons in the Aird.

Lang, lang may he wag roun' the tap o' yon brae,
Wi' a pouch never wantin'—a heart never wae;
Mony tears 'll be shed, when, beneath the cauld swaird,
Are the banes laid o' Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

My love ne'er court nor palace saw,
Ne'er followed Fashion's giddy wheel,
Yet flings in shade her beauties a',—
My peerless Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

The modest, winnin', artless smile,
The leuk that shows a bosom leal,
Where never dwelt a trace o' guile,
A' meet in Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

She's pure as pearly draps that fa',
  Frae e'en o' Joy for ithers' weal,
Or harebell on yon castle wa',—
  My winsome Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

On wishes o' her sordid ban',
  Let Fortune set her gowden seal,
Gi'e me the heart, gi'e me the han',
  O' bonny Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

Thomas Booth, Printer, King-street, Manchester.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Shift we the scene from Mr. Southey and Switzerland to Mr. John Ramsay, weaver, Kilmarnock. How fleet is a glance of the mind!—and if a man is determined to hunt out genius, there is no saying, in these days, where he may be carried. 'Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he finds it stopping a bunghole?' asks Shakspere; and, on the same principle, why may not imagination discover genius in a red nightcap, working at the loom in Kilmarnock. We care not for the outward casket—it is the gem silently glittering within which we prize. Is the dewdrop less beautiful because it happens to fall upon the humblest blade of grass, rather than into the bosom of the full-blown rose? Genius comes like the dew from the starry sky, and dreams not of the conventional distinctions of artificial society. Mr. John Ramsay may be a weaver in the sight of man, but he is a poet in the sight of Heaven, and he has his reward in his own breast. We do not mean to say that Mr. John Ramsay is another Burns; all we mean is, he has the gentler susceptibilities of genius about him, and we are therefore glad to have it in our power to give publicity to one of his effusions. It is the latest effort of his muse, although in the present state of our trade, he writes, 'I must say with Burns—*Sma' heart hae I to sing.*'"—*Edinburgh Literary Journal, or Weekly Register of Criticism and Belles Lettres.*

"I have been struck with wonder at finding expressions so forcible and eloquent—for so they deserve to be termed—proceeding from an individual who describes himself as occupying so obscure and remote a situation in society, and who might have been so little expected,

when his education and circumstances were taken into account, to display accomplishments in such matters."—*Robert Chambers, Esq., one of the Editors of Chambers's Journal.*

"We concur in the wonder and the praise which Mr. Robert Chambers has expressed of the force and eloquence of the expressions which distinguish some of the compositions of the accomplished operative."—*Glasgow Constitutional, March*, 1840.

"The volume presents so many charming pieces, that we are sure all will be delighted with it; and while, to the general reader, its numerous beauties cannot fail to prove highly attractive, to the sons of Ayrshire it will be more peculiarly delightful, as written among scenes which memory loves to haunt, endeared as they are by the recollection of earlier, and perhaps of happier, years. We thank John Ramsay, whoever or whatever he may be, for the galaxy he has presented to us; and we take leave of him for the present, by wishing success to his muse, and recommending him to the attention of our readers."—*Glasgow Liberator.*

"The author has evidently read much of the best of poetry, is a keen observer of nature, and possesses considerable originality of thought, a lively vein of humour, and is capable of highly appreciating the ridiculous, and portraying it in a strong light."—*Ayr Advertiser, December* 19, 1839.

"With his description of the sports of the day [in 'Eglinton Park Meeting'] he has contrived to weave in descriptions of nature,—evincing a taste for the picturesque and sublime—familiar humour is mingled with philosophical reflection—pathos, and the gentle susceptibilities of our nature, with satire and burlesque, political, theological, and local."—*Kilmarnock Journal, November* 18, 1839.

"The poem ['Dundonald,'] is rich in poetical imagery, historical detail, and melting pathos, calculated to win the admiration of all by whom it is perused. Our space will not allow us to notice the minor poems of Mr. Ramsay: some of them are of a very superior character, and fully establish his claim to be classed among the poets of Scotland."—*Ayr Observer, December* 24, 1839.

"The leading poem, 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' is a strong, manly, manners-painting piece, full of humour, pathos, and description, in rapid interchange. The miscellaneous pieces which follow are all of them equally the productions of a shrewd, vigorous mind."—*Dumfries Herald, April* 17, 1840.

"We have been favoured with a glance at a splendid poem, entitled 'An Address to Dundonald Castle,' inscribed to the noble proprietor of that very ancient royal residence—by Mr. John Ramsay. The intrinsic merits of this production rank its author high amongst the modern bards of Caledonia. Without filling a whole page of 'The Reformer' we cannot give our readers an adequate idea of the elegance and excellence of this poetic effusion: suffice it to say, that the sentiments which it contains, and the language in which they are breathed, are admirably calculated to inspire the poet, to arouse the patriot, to animate the christian, and to delight the most indifferent reader."—*Ayrshire Reformer.*

"The work has already attained to a third edition, and is marked by much shrewdness, and a deep vein of satire—by imagination and fancy to fashion new conceptions, and judgment to blend in harmony all the materials which have thus been accumulated—by no inconsiderable knowledge of nature, both moral and physical—aad by touching pathos and sensibility."—*Kelso Chronicle, May* 28, 1841.

"The leading poem, 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' is distinguished for sound, manly, vigorous thought, abounding at the same time with rich and humourous description. Mr. Ramsay is unquestionably a man of considerable genius—appears to have read and studied well the very best of poetry, and is withal an acute and shrewd observer of human nature. * * * Mr. Ramsay's poems, while they redound so much to his own credit, are honourable to the land of his birth—a land rendered classic by the works of the immortal Burns."—*Kelso Mail, May* 26, 1841.

"Mr. Ramsay, in his various pieces, evinces many of the greatest attributes of a true poet, whether he treats of the grave or the gay, the humorous, or the pathetic.

His language is terse, forcible, and appropriate, and has the high merit of being poetical, without that straining at effect which so often accompanies mediocrity of talent."—*Galloway Register, October* 22, 1841.

"These are poems which few can read without the heart yielding its tribute of gratitude—a tear. We are not surprised that the works of John Ramsay should have reached a third edition. Our wonder is more directed to the circumstance of a man in a humble rank of life, and who received few advantages from education, being able to write with so much power of eloquence and beauty. The volume is full of genius, and the reader, whatever his taste may be, will find something to please."—*Caledonian Mercury, October* 31, 1840.

"We shall not assume to say what Ramsay might have been, had fortune placed him in a different position in life to that which he has thus far adorned. The man, however, whose muse could, from the loom shop of a Kilmarnock weaver, give to the world even one strain of the many which adorn this unpretending volume, may fairly claim to be worthy of, if already he has not achieved, immortality. Some few of the poems here are perhaps little worthy of him—some few which appear to be the productions of merely ephemeral thoughts, occurrences, and perhaps feelings. These, even, are often clever; whilst in many of the more sterling productions of his pen a poetic talent is displayed which is highly honourable to their author. The 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' and 'Dundonald Castle' are forcibly written, and display occasional beauties of a very high order; whilst in 'Musings by the Clyde,' and a few of his occasional pieces, we can find little which will not do credit to a writer of much greater pretensions. On another occasion we shall endeavour to give an extract or two, as specimens of the style of our bard. At present we can only say to him, *strive on* towards

'The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;'

and predict that he will not occupy a mean place there in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen and the world."—*Liverpool Standard, December* 9, 1842.

"Eglinton Park Meeting, and Other Poems, *by John Ramsay, Kilmarnock.* 1842.—This is a small

volume of poems (chiefly in the Scottish Lowland dialect), containing many pleasing compositions of considerable merit. The generally plaintive and somewhat sombre cast of the author's poetry, dwelling chiefly, when in a serious mood, upon the grandeurs and terrors of external nature, and the desolated pride of ancient halls, is nevertheless often highly and effectively relieved by striking instances of that dry sarcastic humour and angular shrewdness of expression which all who are in the least degree acquainted with Scottish character and Scottish literature are prepared at once to expect as a qualification, and enjoy as a congeniality. The author is a man apparently of varied and extensive experience of life, who has had many troubles to contend with, and many trials of heart to submit to; and such, the clouds which have overhung from time to time his worldly prospects, are faithfully and forcibly reflected in his verse, as well as those moments of light which outbalance whole years of gloom, and which with every man occasionally enliven the landscape of life."—*Liverpool Chronicle, October* 29, 1842.

"No one can read the above without admiring the poetry, and being struck with the feeling and force of expression."—*Grant's London Journal.*

"EGLINTON PARK MEETING, AND OTHER POEMS. *By John Ramsay. Edinburgh: Stirling, Kenney, and Co.*—John Ramsay, the author of this little volume of poems, is a carpet weaver by trade, and a native of the town of Kilmarnock, in Scotland, famous for the manufacture of its carpets, bonnets, and night-caps; but far more famous for being what may be called the birthplace of the first edition of Burns's poems. It is thus, perhaps, one of the most interesting localities in Scotland. The associations arising from the circumstances just alluded to, and some others connecting the town with the history of the illustrious poet above named, might be supposed to operate rather disadvantageously than otherwise as regards Mr. Ramsay's productions, and, assuredly, if they had possessed less merit than they do, it would have been so. There is, however, a freshness and originality in most of Mr. Ramsay's poems that effectually protect them from any unfavourable in-

fluence to which association or comparison might give rise. We have read them with very great pleasure, having rarely met with a volume of miscellaneous poetry, in which we found so much variety and excellence combined, both in the humourous and pathetic. We refer to our poet's corner for a specimen of Mr. Ramsay's style."—*Preston Chronicle, July* 8, 1843.

"Mr. Ramsay's poems have now reached a sixth edition, which, we understand, is nearly exhausted. When a work has been so extensively circulated, it is almost superfluous, on our parts, to give an opinion on it. We must, however, be allowed to say that there is much in the book to deserve the support which the anthor has received. A keen sense of the ridiculous, as well as strong powers of description, characterize the principal poem. The author has not travelled from Dan to Beersheba and found all barren. He has been an observer of men and things, and has profited by his experience. His 'Address to Dundonald Castle' has received much and deserved praise for its picturesque and pathetic beauty, and many other of the smaller poems are possessed of great merit. We hope Mr. Ramsay may go on and prosper."—*Odd Fellows Magazine, October*, 1843.

"This unpretending little volume, emanating from a person moving in humble life, but endowed with a gifted mind, presents an agreeable melange of verse,—sentimental, romantic, and epigrammatic. The leading poem of the volume, which gives its title to the work, is a lively portraiture of the moving incidents of the races, annually held at that arena of revived chivalry, Eglinton Park—it is full of bustle and animation and genuine character, and exhibits a happy power of blending humour with satire in description. The poem flows on harmoniously, and possesses a continuous interest, which carries the reader pleasantly to its close. The minor poems are distinguished by much grace and beauty, and give evidence of the author's intimate acquaintance with the romantic and stirring events of which Scotland has so frequently been the scene."—*Bradshaw's Journal, March*, 1843.